

LETTER IX.

Retrospective View of the State of Parties in Spain—Joseph Buonaparte returns to Madrid—Second Campaign in Spain and Portugal. A. D. 1809.

THE political state of Spain, at the moment Napoleon first marched his armies into it, and treacherously trepanned the royal family into his toils, was unquestionably deplorable in the extreme. The subject has been briefly touched upon already, but I shall not apologize to you for introducing in this place a few additional remarks.

The emperor of France, having formed the determination, not only of extending his personal influence, but also of aggrandizing his family in every possible mode, had sufficient penetration to perceive a very favourable opportunity of doing it in the existing state of the peninsula. The languor and imbecility of the Spanish government, and the evident decline of the power and vigour of that monarchy, suggested to him the idea of a usurpation, and seemed to ascertain the facility of its accomplishment. Had he been as prudent as he was ambitious, he would have remained content with the power of dictating to the court of Madrid, in the great points of war and policy; but he was desirous of securing a more complete and permanent sway, by the erection of a new dynasty. With this view, he studiously fermented the dissensions in the Spanish cabinet, and encouraged the animosities of party; and the artful activity of his emissaries, aided by the intrigues of the disaffected around the court, at length produced a crisis which was auspicious to his insidious and malignant purpose.

The pernicious influence which Godoy, the prince of Peace, had acquired over the weak mind of the king, disgusted Ferdinand, the heir-apparent: and this prince more particularly resented his exclusion from all concern in the administration of public affairs. His discontent was inflamed by the insinuations of the French ambassador, Beauharnois, by whose advice he rejected the proposal of the court for a marriage with one of his relatives, the minister's sister-in-law, and secretly addressed a letter to Napoleon, offering his hand to any disengaged lady of the imperial family of France. This clandestine correspondence, and the nomination of the duke del Infantado as chief commander of the army in the event of the king's death, furnished Godoy with a pretext for accusing Ferdinand with treasonable machinations; and the latter was arrested, imprisoned, and menaced with a criminal process; but the rising indignation and murmurs of the people, and the submissive behaviour of the royal prisoner, prompted his father to order his liberation.

To secure the subserviency of the imbecile monarch and the favourite Godoy, and at the same time facilitate the seizure of the monarchy, Napoleon, on the 27th of October, 1807, concluded at Fontainebleau a treaty for the dismemberment of Portugal. It was stipulated that the northern division of that kingdom should be transferred to the king of Etruria, and the southern part to the prince of Peace, under the guarantee and protection of his Catholic majesty: that the middle portion should remain in sequestration, for future disposal; and that the colonial territories of the same crown should be divided between France and Spain. By a separate convention,

United States issued a proclamation on the 2d of November, in which he declared that all the restrictions imposed by the non-intercourse law should cease in relation to France and her dependencies. Great Britain was now called upon to fulfil her engagements by revoking her orders in council. *She refused, on pretence that the revocation of the French decrees had not actually taken effect.* See *Willard's History of America*.

On the 16th of May following, the British sloop of war "Little Belt," commanded by captain Bingham, had the temerity to fire on the American frigate "President," commanded by commodore Rogers. The aggressor was soon punished, however, with the loss of thirty men killed and wounded. In short, it appeared evident to the world, from the whole course of British policy towards the United States, that it was the intention of the former to force the latter into a war, which she finally effected, to her own disgrace, and the deathless glory of her opponent.—AM. ED.

twenty-eight thousand French troops were allowed to enter Spain, under the pretext of proceeding to Lisbon: but a much greater number, commanded by Murat, embraced the opportunity of intrusion; since, according to general Foy's statement, the French armies which entered the peninsula prior to the 1st of June, 1808, amounted to no less than one hundred and seventeen thousand men, divided into five corps-d'armes, under Junot, Dupont, Moncey, Bessières, and Duchesne, with a reserve of the imperial guard: and the numbers which thus crossed the Pyrenees were followed, before the 15th of August, by a reinforcement of forty thousand men: making a total of one hundred and sixty thousand men.(1) This immense force, once admitted, obtained, with little difficulty, possession of some of the strongest towns. These movements filled the king with serious apprehensions that Napoleon had other objects in contemplation than the marching of a small army to Lisbon, and his fears were not removed by the progressive disclosure of the emperor's views. His envoy Isquierdo informed him that he was expected by his powerful ally to resign, for the benefit of the French empire, the provinces situated between the Pyrenees and the Ebro, in return for a more commanding influence in Portugal than was stipulated for in the late treaty. The emperor hoped to intimidate the feeble-minded monarch into a retreat from his kingdom to his transatlantic possessions, and Charles IV. seemed disposed to copy the example lately set him by the regent of Portugal: but his subjects no sooner got intimation that such an object was in the view of the royal family than they exclaimed against it so loudly that he promised to remain with them and share their fate. Not satisfied with this assurance, the malecontents of the province of Aranjuez resolved to wreak their vengeance on the obnoxious favourite Godoy, whose life, however, they spared at the intercession of Ferdinand. When he had been deprived of his power and imprisoned, Charles became dejected, and despairing of ever again reigning in tranquillity, declared his intention of resigning his crown. His son did not dissuade him from his purpose, but readily accepted the offered royalty, and was proclaimed king by the title of Ferdinand VII.(2)

Such was the posture of affairs when the armies of France, professedly entering the country as an ally, began to take possession of their fortified places, and, as mentioned in a former letter, were followed by Napoleon and his brother Joseph Buonaparte. The emperor made his entry into Madrid, and presented himself to the inhabitants of the peninsula, not as a master, but as a liberator. "I have abolished," said he, "the inquisition, which Europe and the age have denounced. Priests ought to direct the conscience, but not to exercise any external and corporeal jurisdiction over their fellow-citizens. I have suppressed the feudal rights, and any one may now establish inns, ovens, mills, fisheries, and give free scope to his industry. The selfishness, the wealth, and the prosperity of a small number of men are more injurious to your agriculture than the heats of the dog-star. As there is only one God, there ought to be in one state only one law. All partial judicatures have been usurped, and are contrary to the rights of the nation: I have destroyed them The present generation may entertain various opinions: too many passions have been put in motion, but your posterity will bless me as your regenerator: they will place among the memorable days of their history, those in which I have been among you; and from these days will date the prosperity of Spain."

This announcement was in itself quite sufficient to call into action all the energies of a domineering and jealous priesthood, who could not but perceive that this "liberator's" object was to undermine their influence and ruin their occupation. Spain unquestionably needed a liberator; one who by the return of civilization, should restore them to a better condition, and infuse among them just notions of their natural rights and liberties. But in such a country as Spain, this is no more the work of a day, than was the cutting of the canal Napoleon; and when a country is immersed in ignorance, bar-

(1) See general Foy's History of the Peninsular War. London, 1827.

(2) *Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Revolution d'Espagne*, par M. Nellerro. Paris, 1814.

expected from it. The advance of Soult and Ney with twenty-five thousand men encouraged the retiring troops to a resumption of courage and alacrity, and they seemed inclined to force the post of Talavera, which the Spanish general Cuesta occupied with his army. It was proposed that the passes of Banos and Porales should be defended; but the Spanish general was so tardy in his movements that the former position was left without succour, and Placentia was seized by the advancing enemy, whose progress intimidated the Spaniards so much that they abandoned Talavera, where fifteen hundred of the wounded were unfortunately left. Sir Arthur Wellesley, now created lord Wellington, was displeased with this movement, as it exposed the combined troops to the risk of a simultaneous attack in the front and rear; and as he reposed little confidence in the Spaniards, and was doubtful of the practicability of a retreat in case of disaster, he resolved to make an immediate choice of a defensive position. He therefore ordered his army to cross the Tagus, at the bridge of Argobispo, and fixed his residence at Deletosa, where he thought himself well situated for the defence of Almaraz and the lower parts of the river.

It now became daily more and more apparent that the patriotic cause in Spain was suffering greatly from the want of a regular system of co-operation, the impolitic division of the military command, and the continuance of abuses and grievances in every branch of the administration; and it gave particular uneasiness to the British government. To promote a change of system, the marquis Wellesley was instructed to visit the seat of the supreme junta, then sitting at Cadiz. He was received with politeness, and his suggestions met with respectful attention. He urged upon them the necessity of supplying the wants of the British troops, and of facilitating their progress, that they might not be obliged to quit the country. He hinted the expediency of appointing his brother, lord Wellington, who had so resolutely supported the cause of an injured nation, to the chief command of the Spanish army, which would thus be more effectually united with its allies. The native troops, he said, ought to be subjected to a new organization and to a more efficient discipline: public spirit ought to be more eagerly promoted; the ruling council, being too numerous for an executive body, might prudently be diminished; and the convocation of the cortes ought not to be delayed. The tardiness of Spanish deliberation did not immediately adopt these prudent and useful hints: yet the wisdom of the ambassador made some impression upon the most intelligent members of the junta.

General Cuesta had presumed to remonstrate against the retreat of lord Wellington, alleging the probability of their being able to defeat the French by a strict union and concert: but his lordship was so disgusted at the conduct of the Spaniards during the late battle, that, in a letter addressed to his brother, while he acknowledged the insufficiency of his army to withstand the French without assistance, he declared it to be his opinion, that he ought to renounce all idea of co-operation with the Spanish troops. Cuesta was soon after obliged by the approach of the enemy to retreat with precipitation and loss; and sir Robert Wilson, who had recently pushed some parties of his small corps almost to the gates of Madrid, was attacked at Banos, but did not retire until he had defended the pass for nine hours. Venegas, about the same time, had an unfortunate engagement at Almonacid. He formed an extended line, in the hope of turning the flank of the enemy, who, deriding his efforts, penetrated the line in various parts, and totally routed his army.

While the British troops remained on the defensive, some of the Spanish generals were busily employed in reorganizing their respective armies. The duke del Parque was particularly active in this service; and his troops, posted on the heights of Tamames, found an opportunity for exertion, in consequence of an attack from general Marchand, who endeavoured to turn their left. The retreat of the cavalry gave the assailants a temporary advantage; but the steady valour of the infantry at length put them to flight.

Amid these operations the conduct of the junta was the subject of much complaint. Its attempt to array the nation against the invaders was cen-

sured as feeble and inefficient: its direction of the disposable force pronounced injudicious, particularly in risking offensive operations in La Mancha: its inattention to that branch of the war which was connected with the defence of fortresses, also excited animadversion; and many discontented politicians demanded a more systematic display of vigour and energy than the assembly had yet evinced. A small council of regency, chosen with the most deliberate discrimination, was proposed as a substitute, until the cortes should meet; and as this seemed to be the prevalent opinion, the members of the junta so far admitted the principle, that they named a committee of six of their number for the better enforcement of decisive measures of war and policy. They found a warm opposer of their continued authority in the marquis Romana, who not only condemned their conduct, but denied the legitimacy of their power. His exertions, being strongly supported by the remonstrances of other distinguished patriots, drew forth a manifesto, dated the 28th of October, stating the exigencies and announcing the hopes of the nation, and ordaining the convocation of a representative assembly.

In this proclamation it was stated that an absurd and feeble tyranny had paved the way for French despotism, which at first appeared with a flattering exterior, promising reform in the administration, and announcing the empire of the laws; but the Spaniards were neither so deficient in penetration to be deluded by the artifices of intriguing politicians, nor so spiritless as to submit to the mandates of tyrants. They therefore rushed into arms, and, by their patriotic enthusiasm, soon obtained the honours and rewards of victory. Instead of falling into anarchy, they regenerated and recomposed the state; and established, without violence or disorder, a supreme government and a commanding authority. The central junta, while the expulsion of the enemy was its first object, attended with zeal to the removal of abuses; and as soon as the turbulence of war allowed, proclaimed the revival of the cortes, a name which recalled ideas of legitimate and constitutional sway, connecting the rights of the people with the support of the throne. Some were of opinion, that a regency of three or five persons, without a representative body, would answer every purpose of good government: but such an administration would be accessible to the intrigues of the tyrant and his emissaries, and would not be able to enforce that general submission which the imposing authority of a national council would command. Others were inclined to maintain the preference of the different juntas, as representative bodies, to the proposed assembly; because they concluded that it would be constituted in the ancient mode so as not sufficiently to represent the people; but it was the intention of the ruling council to make such arrangements as would tend to remove this objection. The proposed convocation, it was hoped, would prove the best remedy for the disorders of the state; would call forth all the energies of the nation; confound the views of the enemy; and secure the triumph of the glorious cause of freedom and independence.

The inhabitants of Gerona, at this momentous crisis, gave a striking proof of their zeal in the cause of their country. Emulating the fame of the defenders of Saragossa, they long defied all the efforts of the enemy. They bravely sustained the most impetuous attacks and repeatedly compelled the assailants to retire. The neighbouring castle of Monjuich, though not strongly garrisoned, was defended with great bravery. Five assaults were repelled; and the besiegers were obliged to continue their operations for five subsequent weeks, before the danger of destruction could prompt the remaining occupants to retire into the city. General Blake, who had twice contended with Suchet in the province of Arragon, and had not been able on either occasion to prevent his discouraged men from retreating, hoped to be more successful in an effort for the relief of Gerona, which was not then very closely invested. While one part of his army attacked the enemy at Brunolas, another division found an opportunity of entering the city, recruiting the garrison and supplying its wants. More than four months after the first investment, when three breaches had been made in the walls, the besiegers ex-

pected the speedy reduction of the place. On the 19th of September, three strong columns were sent forward to an assault, and vengeance seemed to impend over the patriotic defenders. To oppose the intended attack, Don Mariano Alvarez, the governor, made such dispositions as the time and his limited means allowed; and the breaches were guarded with great courage and indefatigable vigilance. The enemy entered at two of the openings, and penetrated to the nearest houses; but their intrusion was at the expense of their lives. Other attempts were made with equal audacity, and baffled with equal spirit. More than eight hundred of the French, according to the Spanish account, were killed; and the repulse operated for some time as a check to the invaders. As the possession of Hostalrich, and the vicinity of Blake's army, tended to prolong the defence of Gerona, general Augereau determined to possess himself of the former town and defeat general Blake; and by the great superiority of his force, he at length succeeded in accomplishing both objects. He dislodged the Spanish corps from the heights of Brunolas, and drove them to a remote station; the gates of Hostalrich were then set on fire; the French gained admission, attacked the defenders in every street, and overwhelmed them. Precluded from farther supply and hopeless of relief, Alvarez capitulated on the 10th of December, and the garrison were made prisoners of war.

In the army of La Mancha, the marquis of Ariezaga had superseded Venegas in the command, and high expectations were consequently entertained from its operations. It was confidently hoped that the new general would be able to advance to Madrid, in defiance of all opposition, and expel the usurper from the throne. But he was encountered, on the 19th of November, by a French force, under the command of king Joseph, assisted by marshals Soult, Mortier, and Victor, at Ocana, near the south bank of that river, when the action terminated in a signal victory on the part of the enemy, and the vanquished army retreated in great confusion beyond the mountains. On this occasion, however, the Spanish infantry, particularly the division of Lacey, fought with great bravery, keeping the enemy in check for more than two hours, and a great part of the French line fell back in disorder; but the superiority of the enemy's artillery, and the timid and irresolute behaviour of the Spanish cavalry, whose flight had an ill effect on the rest of the army, enabled the French to triumph. More than ten thousand of the vanquished were either killed, wounded, or made prisoners. Another defeat quickly followed; the duke del Parque, being attacked at Alba, on the river Tormes, withstood repeated assaults, but he failed to derive from the cavalry the support which he expected: and the impetuous vigour of the French drove him, after the loss of many of his troops, to the mountainous confines of Galicia. And thus, at the termination of the second campaign in the peninsula, the dark clouds of misfortune hung over the patriotic cause.

LETTER X.

The internal or domestic Affairs of France—Napoleon repudiates his Wife, Josephine, and marries the Daughter of the Emperor of Austria—Consequences of this Marriage on his Politics—Deposes his Brother Louis, and annexes Holland to France—Also the Valleys of Piedmont and the Hanse Towns—Hanover annexed to Westphalia—Bernadotte elected to the Throne of Sweden—Political Affairs of the North of Europe. A. D. 1810.

THE legislative body of France assembled on the 3d of December, 1809, on which occasion the emperor Napoleon addressed them in a style of lofty congratulation. Adverting to the late expedition to Holland, he told them that "the English army had terminated its projects in the pestilential marshes of Walcheren. The pope, whose weakness or treachery opposed the progress of the French arms in Spain, was stripped of his temporal power and authority, and compelled to restore it to the successor of Charlemagne, from

whom he received it. By the treaty of Vienna, all his allies had acquired fresh increase of territory. The Illyrian provinces stretched the frontiers of his great empire to the Saave. Holland, placed between England and France, must undergo some changes, in order to ensure the safety of the empire, and to promote their mutual interest"—and he concluded his address with the prediction of new triumphs in the peninsula. In the annual *exposé*, which immediately followed, the great works carrying on under the auspices of the emperor were particularly enumerated. The canal Napoleon, uniting the Rhine and the Rhone; the immense works at Cherbourg; the magnificent military roads traversing the Alps, the Apennines, and the Pyrenees; the draining of the marshes of Burgundy, &c. &c.—all these were indeed imperial works, and worthy of his fame and power.

Such was the posture of affairs when the ruler of France was in the zenith of his greatness and glory, that he surprised the world, if indeed any thing in his conduct could be thought surprising, by one of the basest actions of his life, namely, the repudiation of his amiable and accomplished spouse, Josephine, and his marriage with the eldest daughter of the emperor of Austria. With the former he had now cohabited more than a dozen years, but she had the misfortune to bear him no issue. He was passionately attached to her; for her personal charms were great, and as numerous as could be possessed by a wife. She had shared his more lowly fortunes, and by her management and address during his absence in Egypt, had paved the way for the splendid success which he had attained on his return. She had also done much to render his government popular, by softening the sudden and fierce bursts of passion to which he was subject. No one could understand like Josephine the peculiarities of her husband's temper; no one dared, like her, to encounter his displeasure, rather than not advise him for his better interest; no one could possess such opportunities of watching the fit season for intercession; and no one, it is allowed on all hands, made a more prudent or a more beneficent use of the opportunities she enjoyed. The character of Napoleon, vehement by temper, a soldier by education, and invested by the success of his arms with the most despotic power, required in an especial manner the moderating influence of such a mind, which could interfere without intrusion, and remonstrate without offence. It is certain that she had obtained great influence over her husband, and to maintain it, Josephine cheerfully made the greatest personal sacrifices. In all the rapid journeys which he performed, she was his companion. No obstacle of road or weather was permitted to interfere with her departure. However sudden the call, the empress was ever ready; however untimely the hour, her carriage was in instant attendance. The influence which she maintained by the sacrifice of her personal comforts was used for the advancement of her husband's best interests,—the relief of those who were in distress, and the averting the consequences of hasty resolutions, formed in a moment of violence or irritation.

But the sterility of the empress Josephine was now rendered, by the course of nature, an irremediable evil, over which she mourned in hopeless distress; and conscious on what precarious circumstances the continuance of their union seemed now to depend, she gave way occasionally to fits of jealousy, less excited, according to Napoleon, by personal attachment, than by suspicion that her influence over her husband's mind might be diminished, in case of his having offspring by some paramour. She therefore naturally turned her thoughts to seek a remedy, and exerted her influence over her husband, to induce him to declare some one his successor, according to the unlimited powers vested in him by the imperial constitution. She directed his attention towards his step-son Eugene Beauharnois, her own son by her first marriage; but this did not meet Napoleon's approbation. A child, the son of his brother Louis, by Hortense Beauharnois, appeared, during its brief existence, more likely to become the destined heir of this immense inheritance. But the son of Louis and Hortense died of a disorder incident to childhood; and thus was broken, while yet a twig, the shoot, that growing to maturity, might

barism, and poverty, covered with convents, and governed by monks, it is necessary to reform its social state before we concern ourselves about its freedom. Spain had at this time many of the distinguished friends of freedom who understood its value, and laboured to benefit their country by its introduction among them; but they did not relish the emperor Napoleon's method of forcing the boon upon them against their inclination, and they resisted his attempts to do so. The nation was divided into two classes, the advocates of civil liberty, and of slavish submission to the priesthood—that of the cortes and that of the monks; and though aiming at very different objects, they had the skill to defend themselves in common. The one was at the head of the superior and middle, the other of the lower classes, and they vied with each other in inspiring their countrymen with the sentiments of civil independence or religious fanaticism. You will be much amused with the following catechism, which was composed for the instruction of the lower orders, and commonly used by the priests at this time:—

“Tell me, my child, who art thou? A Spaniard, by the grace of God.—Who is the enemy of our happiness? The emperor of the French.—How many natures has he? Two: the human and the diabolic nature.—How many emperors of the French are there? One in three deceitful persons.—What are their names? Napoleon, Murat, and Manuel Godoy.—Which of the three is most wicked? They are all three equally wicked.—From whence did Napoleon come? From sin.—Murat? From Napoleon.—And Godoy? From the fornication of the two.—What is the spirit of the first? Pride and despotism.—Of the second? Rapine and cruelty.—Of the third? Avarice, treason, and ignorance.—What are the French? Ancient Christians become heretics.—Is there any sin in putting a Frenchman to death? No, my father, we gain heaven by putting one of these dogs of heretics to death.—What punishment deserves the Spaniard who is wanting in his duty? The death and infamy of traitors.—What shall deliver us from our enemies? Confidence in each other, and in our arms.”

Such was the hostile spirit which Napoleon, who does not seem to have been properly aware of the pride and jealousy belonging to the Spanish character, had to encounter when he entered the peninsula. But he had engaged himself in a tedious and perilous enterprise, in which his whole system was at fault. He appears to have become intoxicated with the height of his elevation to such a degree, as to forget that victory did not here consist in the defeat of an army and the possession of the capital, but in the entire occupation of the territory, and in that which is still more difficult, the subjection of the mind. Nevertheless, Napoleon was persuading himself that he should subdue this people, when he was recalled to Germany by the fifth coalition, as stated in a former letter.—Let us now resume the narrative of the second campaign in the peninsula, the territory of which was defended foot by foot, and it was necessary to take the towns by assault. The British army having embarked from Corunna, the French bent all their efforts to the subjugation of Spain. The neighbourhood of Saragossa had constantly been the theatre of hostilities; and that renowned city, which had repeatedly baffled all the attempts of the enemy, was one of the first objects of his vengeance. A number of fugitives from the army of Castanos, which was defeated at Tudela, on the 23d of November, 1808, had retreated to Saragossa, and these, added to its martial citizens and armed peasants from the country, composed a body of fifty thousand men, under the command of general Palafox. The siege was conducted by the duke of Montebello, one of the ablest of the French generals. On the 20th of January, 1809, the French made their grand attack.—About noon on the following day the breaches were practicable, and the assailants entered the city. General Lacoste, and a great number of their bravest officers and men, fell in the assault. The determined resolution of the inhabitants, who disputed every inch of ground, and converted every house into a fortress, reduced the French to the necessity of mining and blowing up the houses. The Spaniards, on their part, had recourse to countermining, and the effects of this subterraneous war were

dreadfully destructive. During these terrible operations, the batteries kept up an incessant fire; and by mining and blowing up the houses as they proceeded, the French, on the 17th of February, at length became masters of the city. Not fewer than twenty thousand of its brave defenders were buried under its ruins, after a resistance to which history can scarcely furnish a parallel, and which will render the siege of Saragossa memorable to all future ages.

A series of disasters falling in rapid succession, now seemed to have sealed the doom of Spain. An advantage gained by the duke of Albuquerque, on the 22d of February, over a corps of French at Consevegra, was but a slender compensation for these multiplied misfortunes. The French army in Catalonia made three powerful attacks on that of Spain under general Reding. In the last of these actions, the Spanish general, after an obstinate conflict, in which he was severely wounded, was, on the 12th of March, driven from his position and compelled to retire to Tarragona. Soon after this disaster general Cuesta was defeated, March the 29th, at Medellin, and forced to retire to Monasterio. The patriots about this time recovered Vigo; but their casual advantages were merged in the long train of successive disasters, and the French, having made themselves masters of the centre of Spain, were pushing forward the different divisions of their army towards the extremity of the kingdom.

A better understanding now began to take place between Great Britain and Portugal. General Beresford, invested by the regency with the rank of field-marshal, was most usefully employed in organizing a native force to act with the British army. The duke of Dalmatia, having entered Portugal at Barga, on the 29th of March, took possession of Talavera. In order to preserve his communications, that general had left a garrison at Chaves; which fortress was soon after wrested out of his hands by Don Francisco Silveira, an active and gallant officer in the Portuguese service, who continued to harass the French and straiten their quarters, when, on the 22d of April, sir Arthur Wellesley once more landed at Lisbon, with a reinforcement of British troops. Instantly repairing to Coimbra, he put himself at the head of his assembled forces, and advanced against Oporto, at the same time detaching marshal Beresford to occupy the fords of the upper Douro. Marshal Soult, finding himself in danger of being insulated, judged it necessary to evacuate Oporto, and to retreat with all possible expedition into Galicia, which he did, not without sustaining some loss. Marshal Victor, in the mean time, who commanded in Estremadura, after defeating the Spanish general Cuesta, at Medellin, had made himself master of Alcantara, on which the British commander returned to the south, and Victor retired to his former station at Guadiana. The operations in Galicia and the Asturias, under general Romana, were also favourable; and the French were nearly driven from these provinces.

On the 20th of July, sir Arthur Wellesley effected his junction with Cuesta, at Oropesa; but Victor, aware of his danger, had by this time crossed the Tagus, at the famous bridge of Almarez, that noble monument of Roman magnificence. The allied British and Portuguese army marched along the banks of the river towards Olalla, where Victor had his head-quarters, and who had now received large reinforcements from Madrid, led on by king Joseph in person. The British commander took an advantageous position near Talavera de la Reyna, general Cuesta's encampment on the right extending to the Tagus. Early on the morning of the 28th, the enemy attacked the British in force, making a demonstration at the same time on the opposite quarter. The battle continued at intervals during the whole day, and ended in the final repulse of the enemy. The French are said to have lost on the occasion, about ten thousand men, killed or wounded, and the number of those who suffered in the British army was between five and six thousand, independent of twelve hundred Spaniards under Cuesta, either killed or wounded.

This apparent victory had not the immediate effect which might have been