

Translated by Greg Gorsuch
Part 16

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

OF THE

PENINSULA WAR,

FROM 1807 TO 1814,

SERVING AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE JOURNALS OF THE SIEGES MADE
OR SUSTAINED BY THE FRENCH IN THIS WAR.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

I

The Army of the Pyrenees, still sixty thousand men strong, had retreated to the right bank of the Adour, from Bayonne to Port-de-Lanne, and extended to its left behind the Bidouze as far as Saint-Palais, with bridgeheads at Bidache and Came. Marshal Soult had moved his headquarters to Peyrehorade. General Harispe, recalled from the Army of Aragon to organize the levying of the Basques, among whom he was born, covered the left with a small division near Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, and was supported in the rear on the Saison or Gave de Mauléon by the brigade of General Paris. The enemy was thus squeezed between the lower Adour, the Pyrenees, and the sea, occupying only relatively poor cantons exhausted by six months of war.

Lord Wellington had established his headquarters at Saint-Jean-de-Luz; he received by sea the supplies necessary for his army, even the fodder for his cavalry. Having rebuilt the bridges at Cambo and Ustaritz, he had moved the greater part of his forces between the Nive and the Adour. On 3 January, he made some attempts to cross the latter river at Urt, where a construction site was located; but a strong reconnaissance, pushed by Marshal Soult on La Bastide-Clairence, made him abandon this enterprise. Towards the end of January, he received from England six thousand reinforcements and fourteen hundred horses. Marshal Soult, on the other hand, had to send into the interior, to reinforce the Emperor's army, two infantry divisions, the foot gendarmerie, a division of dragoons, a brigade of light cavalry, four artillery companies with twenty-eight cannons, and nearly two thousand elite men intended for the Imperial Guard, which reduced his army to forty thousand men. To compound the unfavorable odds, the Duke of Angoulême landed at Saint-Jean de Luz, reawakening the hopes of the many supporters of the House of Bourbon.

The dismemberment of our forces signaled the resumption of enemy operations. On 14 February, Lord Wellington, taking the offensive from his right, led General Hill with a corps of twenty thousand men against General Harispe at Hélette, forcing the latter to withdraw to the Saison. The enemy continued its movement towards Saint-Palais, where it crossed the Bidouze.

It also forced the line of the Saison and reached Sauveterre, intending to cross the Gave d'Oloron there. Upon hearing news of this movement, Marshal Soult advanced to Sauveterre; and, in order to support his left, he brought the troops on his right closer to Peyrehorade. The division of General Abbé remained in Bayonne to reinforce the garrison, which was thus brought to thirteen thousand men. This fortress was abandoned on February 17th; and the English having crossed the Adour River towards its mouth on the 24th, it found itself completely blockaded.

Lord Wellington, continuing his offensive movement, crossed the Gave d'Oloron and Pau above Peyrehorade with a portion of his army, while General Hill's corps continued to advance on the right. Marshal Soult withdrew on February 22nd to Orthez, determined to fight a battle there despite the disadvantages of his position, which allowed him to retreat only by the narrow and rugged road to Saint-Sever, through difficult terrain, and which exposed him to being outflanked. Indeed, Lord Wellington, after crossing the Gave de Pau above Peyrehorade, was going up the right bank of this river by the road to Orthez. Marshal Soult took up position on this road, supporting his right at the village of Saint-Boès and his left at the river, which General Clauzel was charged with guarding above the town with three divisions.

Lord Wellington attacked Marshal Soult on 27 February. His forces were twice ours; nevertheless, the victory was hotly contested. Marshal Beresford led three vigorous attacks in front of Saint-Boès, and three times Taupin's division, which was opposed to him, overthrew the enemy with bayonet charges and grapeshot from his artillery. General Foy in the center also defended his positions with the greatest intrepidity; while General Clauzel held in check General Hill, who was trying to cross the Gave at Orthez. Lord Wellington, wishing to make a last effort, led a strong column to the point which united our right wing with the center, and arrived on the Dax road at the rear of our right wing; at the same time, General Hill forced the passage of the gave above Orthez, and threatened our rear. The French army was then forced to fall back to Saint-Sever from where it headed towards Aire, advancing up the Adour. In this battle, we suffered three thousand nine hundred men killed, wounded, or captured; and the enemy lost nearly six thousand men.

Marshal Soult had to choose between three directions: the road from Mont-de-Marsan to Bordeaux, the road from Agen via Condom, or finally the road to Tarbes. As a skilled general, he decided on the latter, which offered him the advantage of relying on the mountains, of being able to join Marshal Suchet's army if necessary, and of keeping Lord Wellington away from Bordeaux, a city influential in terms of its population and wealth, which, offering the enemy a good port and immense resources, would have given him the means to connect with the sea and an excellent base for his subsequent operations. On March 1st, Marshal Soult advanced from Saint-Sever to Tarbes along the right bank of the Adour, hastening his march to outpace General Hill's corps at Aire, which was advancing along the left bank to cut off his route. The Marshal arrived at Aire on March 2nd before General Hill, and immediately detached several divisions against him, which routed his corps. Then, having cut the bridge over the Adour, he continued his march to Tarbes, arriving on the 4th. The French army took up quarters there and enjoyed absolute tranquility for eight days.

Lord Wellington was awaiting the arrival of part of his troops, which he had left below Bayonne to protect the Adour crossing, and the outcome of an expedition by Marshal Beresford to

Bordeaux, where the inhabitants had risen in support of the Bourbons, before resuming the offensive. Marshal Soult, learning of this division of the Anglo-Portuguese army from his headquarters in Rabastens, advanced on Lambèze and Conchez on March 13th, thus threatening the enemy's rear. But Lord Wellington, worried by the French army's presence in Tarbes, had already concentrated his forces. On the 14th, he hastily assembled sixty thousand men at Garlin on the road from Aire to Pau and stopped Marshal Soult; then, maneuvering to outflank him, he advanced to Vic-en-Bigorre to cut off his retreat to Tarbes. General Drouet, heavily attacked on the 19th at Vic-en-Bigorre, nevertheless halted the enemy and allowed the rest of the French army to arrive at Tarbes that same evening. From there, continuing its retreat, the army headed via Saint-Gaudens towards Toulouse, where it arrived on the 24th, after having gained several advantages over the enemy at Martre and Noé.

This is how Marshal Soult managed to make that memorable retreat, in which, with an army that numbered barely thirty thousand men since the Battle of Orthez, while the enemy had sixty-five thousand, he fell back only thirty-six leagues in twenty-five days. Arriving at Toulouse, he established communication with Marshal Suchet, who had just withdrawn to Figueres¹. He hastened to fortify himself to compensate for the numerical inferiority of his troops. He had the suburb of Saint-Cyprien, located on the left bank of the Garonne, on the side of the enemy's arrival, entrenched as a bridgehead: this suburb was occupied by the Maransin Division. The town, located on the right bank, is surrounded by an ancient wall and covered by the Canal du Languedoc which, enveloping it to the east and north at a distance of about a thousand meters, flows downstream into the Garonne. Beyond the canal and to the east, rise the heights of Calvinet, which present a plateau about four thousand meters in length, the slopes of which on the side opposite the town extend to the small river Hers. It was here that Marshal Soult established his principal means of defense. The plateau was crowned with five large redoubts, and guarded by the divisions of D'Armagnac, Harispe and Taupin, under the command of General Clauzel. The canal, in relation to these heights, was in the second line; but on the left, downstream from the town, formed the first line. It was protected in this part by many bridgeheads. General Drouet took up position there with the Darricau and Villatte Divisions, supporting his left at the Garonne, and his right at the Lapujade entrenchments, which from the Alby road connected to the Calvinet heights. The rest of the canal behind these heights was also fortified and guarded by a reserve of six thousand conscripts under the command of General Travot. Finally, the walls of Toulouse themselves were armed with a large artillery, and its defense was entrusted to the city's National Guard.

Lord Wellington, delayed by the rains and the poor state of the roads, worried in his rear by partisan corps and by some troops under the command of General Lafitte, who had remained in the Ariège valley, did not arrive on the Garonne until 27 March, three days after the French army. On the 31st, he crossed this river on a pontoon bridge at Pinsaguel, above Toulouse, crossed the Ariège at Cintegabelle, and advanced as far as Nailloux, seeking to cut off our route to Castelnau; but the bad roads having forced him to abandon this project, he retraced his steps, to attempt the crossing of the Garonne below Toulouse. On the evening of 4 April, he threw a pontoon bridge at Grenade and sent Marshal Beresford across to the right bank with three divisions. This corps was about to be followed by the Army of Galicia, which formed the Fourth Spanish Army under the command of General Freyre, when a sudden flood of the

¹ See supporting documents, no. 115.

Garonne, having swept away the pontoons, held the rest of the Anglo-Portuguese army until the 8th on the left bank. If Marshal Soult had taken the offensive at that moment, he would have placed Marshal Beresford's three divisions in the most imminent danger, which remained isolated for three days on the right bank. But he learned of this event too late, and perhaps he also judged his army too weak to be divided, not wanting to compromise his position beneath the walls of Toulouse. He sent several dispatches to Marshal Suchet, urging him to move into the Ariège, towards Saint-Gaudens, in order to act on the enemy's rear.²

Lord Wellington, having continued his crossing of the Garonne on the 8th, gathered fifty thousand men on the right bank, with whom he presented himself on April 9th before the French lines, whose fortifications, pushed forward with extreme activity, were almost complete. He immediately raised his pontoon bridge above the Château de Blagnac, to establish a more direct communication with General Hill's corps, which he had left on the left bank. At the same time, he sent cavalry parties to Montauban, to observe the outlet of the Tarn bridge which had been covered by a bridgehead, and where General Loverdo commanded with some troops. Lord Wellington was already aware of the events in Paris; nevertheless, hoping to defeat Marshal Soult by a decisive battle, he took the offensive on April 10th at all points. General Hill made a feigned attack on the suburb of Saint-Cyprien with three infantry divisions and a light cavalry brigade. The two English divisions, Picton and Alten, and a German cavalry brigade, advanced towards the lower part of the canal, via the Blagnac and Montauban roads, and attacked the Jumeau and Minimes bridgeheads defended by General Darricau. Two Spanish divisions, commanded by General Freyre, emerged from Croix Daurade and supported by an English cavalry brigade and Portuguese artillery, advanced via the Alby road to the Lapujade entrenchments, with the aim of turning the left of the Calvinet heights, which Marshal Beresford, who had also crossed the Hers at Croix Daurade, was preparing to attack head-on with the divisions of Cole and Picton.

The Spanish had a momentary success and advanced to the foot of our entrenchments; but, attacked on their flank by General D'Armagnac, they were repulsed with a loss of two thousand men. Marshal Beresford, who had advanced along the left bank of the Hers, instead of immediately attacking the left of the Calvinet heights head-on, went up the river to attack our right which was supported by the Sypière redoubt, on the Caraman road. This flank movement, made within cannon range, between our entrenchments and the Hers, was to have the most disastrous consequences for the English, since it gave Marshal Soult the means to cut off Marshal Beresford's corps by bringing down from the plateau one or two divisions on the rear of this corps. Taupin's division, which was in position behind the Sypière redoubt, received the order to move towards the enemy with the light cavalry brigade of General Breton (called Berton). At the same time, D'Armagnac's division and General Soult's cavalry advanced to support him.

General Taupin should have deployed his first brigade under the support of the Sypière redoubt, to crush the enemy with its fire, while the second brigade and its cavalry would flank him. But, carried away by his ardor, and without waiting for the forces that were supposed to support him, he rushed forward from the redoubt, thus paralyzing its fire; and, with his first brigade in close column, he approached Cole's division, which was advancing first. Suddenly, the English turned

² See supporting documents, nos. 116, 117, 118 and 119.

and began a fierce fusillade on our column, which, pressed together, could only respond with the insufficient fire of a few platoons. Disorder then ensued in our ranks. General Taupin tried in vain to rally the fugitives; he fell mortally wounded. His second brigade was also swept away without having been engaged. Marshal Beresford immediately moved to the plateau and attacked the Sypière redoubt. A battalion of the 9th Light Infantry that was there, sharing the general terror, made almost no defense, and the redoubt fell into the hands of the enemy. Our line was thus turned. Although defended with the most ferocious determination, the works on the plateau were successively taken; and the enemy reached the entrenchments of Lapujade, which it also took control of. He attacked the upper part of the canal, at the Demoiselles and Guilheméry bridges, but was repulsed. At four o'clock in the evening, all our troops were withdrawn behind the canal, which formed the second line, from its mouth to the Demoiselles bridge. The shooting continued until nightfall, but without any serious attack from the enemy. During that day, we had six hundred men killed and two thousand six hundred wounded³. The English lost four thousand four hundred men.

Marshal Soult held the canal line all day on the 11th; and it was only the following night that he retreated to Castelnaudary without being disturbed. This inaction on the part of the enemy was a tacit admission of the losses he had suffered and of the fears still inspired in him by Marshal Soult's weak army. It was the finest tribute paid to the heroic conduct of our troops under the walls of Toulouse.

Marshal Soult wrote again to Marshal Suchet to urge him to join him in operating in the enemy's rear⁴; but this Marshal had himself been forced to retreat. By December, the majority of his troops were deployed between Girona and Barcelona. Two divisions were still on the lower Llobregat; one brigade was in Cerdanya; other troops were covering the rear at Olot, Figueres, and Roses. The Anglo-Sicilian army, twelve thousand strong and commanded by General Clinton, who had replaced Lord Bentinck, and a Spanish division of nine thousand men under the command of General Sarsfield, lined the right bank of the Llobregat, from its mouth to Manresa. These troops linked up at Collent with corps of General Elío, seventeen thousand strong, which, from Vic, observed Girona and both banks of the Ter. General Copons, at the head of a corps of eighteen thousand Spaniards, laid siege to Peniscola and blockaded the places guarded by the French garrisons beyond the Llobregat.

Marshal Suchet was awaiting the conclusion of the negotiations that had been underway since the end of 1813 at Valençay and Madrid. Napoleon, finally convinced that Spain was lost to him, had resolved to restore Ferdinand VII to the throne, having been held prisoner at Valençay for five and a half years. A treaty was concluded on 11 December 1813, stipulating peace between the two kingdoms, the evacuation of Spanish territory by the English, the return of prisoners of war, etc. The Duke of San Carlos, the King's principal advisor, was sent to Madrid to submit this treaty to the Regency; but the latter refused to sanction it, on the pretext that the King was not free and that the Spanish could do nothing without consulting their allies.

The Duke of San Carlos had not yet returned to Valençay when Napoleon, whose situation was becoming increasingly critical, informed the King and the princes of Spain that they could return

³ See supporting documents, no. 120.

⁴ See supporting documents, nos. 121 and 122.

to their country without any conditions. The news brought by the Duke of San Carlos did not change the Emperor's resolve. The illustrious captives received their passports on March 7th and set out on the 13th. Ferdinand VII arrived in Perpignan on the 20th.

Pending these events, Marshal Suchet had counted on the bad blood between the English and Spanish generals to maintain his positions in Barcelona and Girona. The enemy attacked the Llobregat bridge at Molino del Rey on January 15th; but was repulsed after a seven-hour cannonade. Marshal Suchet then received orders from the Emperor to direct ten thousand men to Lyon. Forced to retreat behind the Ter, he left General Habert in Barcelona with seven thousand five hundred men and a year's worth of supplies; Hostalrich received a garrison of three hundred and fifty men. To add insult to injury, the fortresses of Lleida and Mequinenza fell into the enemy's hands through a shameful stratagem, using supposed orders from Marshal Suchet, whose number a Spanish officer, employed on his staff, had taken and deserted.

The same trap was set for General Robert, Governor of Tortosa, who, feigning to fall into it, invited General Sans, who was blockading him, to come and take possession of the fortress with two battalions; but the latter did not dare attempt the adventure. Finally, the post of Monzón, defended by a hundred men, surrendered after withstanding the efforts of five thousand men of the Mina troops for four and a half months. (*See the account of the defense, Volume IV.*) The forts of Dénia and Morella had already been forced to capitulate.

In the first days of March, Marshal Suchet received orders to detach a second column of ten thousand men to Lyon. Before leaving, he attempted, but in vain, to free the garrison of Lleida, which the enemy had left at Igualada. He then blew up the forts of Olot, Palamós, and Bàscara; he surrendered Girona to the Spanish and withdrew to Figueres with the remnants of his army, still eleven thousand two hundred strong, including one thousand cavalry.

Soon after, Marshal Suchet was informed of the arrival of King Ferdinand and received orders to surrender all Spanish strongholds to him, while taking the necessary precautions to ensure the return of their garrisons. He went to Perpignan to meet him; and, in keeping with the spirit of the instructions he had received, he agreed to allow the King to continue his journey only as long as D. Carlos, his brother, who was accompanying him, remained a hostage.

Ferdinand left Perpignan on March 22nd; he stayed in Figueres on the 23rd and was received on the banks of the Fluvià by General Copons, in the presence of the armies of both nations. A suspension of arms had been verbally agreed upon for this ceremony.

With the return of the French garrisons experiencing many delays, Marshal Suchet decided to let the Infante D. Carlos leave and to rely on Ferdinand's word for the execution of this clause of the treaty. From the first days of April, he received several dispatches from Marshal Soult, urging him to move through the Ariège towards Saint-Gaudens, in order to threaten the rear of Lord Wellington, who was advancing on Toulouse; but he judged this diversion to be ineffective and did not believe he could attempt it: the road from Quillan to Foix was not passable by artillery, and he had to leave the greater part of his forces in the Roussillon fortresses to form their

garrisons. Fearing, moreover, to compromise his communication with the line of the Rhône, he headed for Narbonne, after having blown up the citadel of Roses⁵.

The entry of the Allies into Paris on 30 March, Napoleon's abdication, the acts of the Provisional Government, and the Battle of Toulouse were the final events of the campaign and brought the war to an end. On 14 April, Marshal Suchet expressed his support for the new government, and Marshal Soult gave his on the 19th. At the end of the month, the Duke of Angoulême came from Lord Wellington's headquarters to review the Army of the Pyrenees. The fortresses of Santoña, Barcelona, Tortosa, Sagunto, Peniscola, Hostalrich, and Figueres were surrendered to the Spanish in May, and twenty thousand French soldiers and employees returned to their homeland.

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⁵ See supporting documents, nos. 118, 119, 121, and 122.

No. 115

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to
Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra.*

Martres, 22 March 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

I have the honor to inform you that I find myself in the position of marching with the army to Toulouse, where I hope to arrive the day after tomorrow. I have held out on the Adour as much as I could, going upstream to the source of this river. Every day, there are some engagements; but there has been no general action since I wrote to you. There is too great a disproportion in the forces for me to be able to maintain myself without the support of a good line.

I don't think the enemy is seeking to cross the Garonne below Toulouse, and everything leads me to believe that they will direct their operations towards the lower Garonne, where they have already made a crossing near Langon, which was unsuccessful, as the troops stationed on the right bank hastily crossed back to rejoin their army during my last move. Being in Toulouse, I will be in a better position to prevent them from engaging in further attempts of this nature, and I will also be able to provide the troops with shoes and other essentials, which they urgently need.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.



No. 116

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to
Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra.*

3 April 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

The enemy column, which I had the honor of informing you about in my letter of 31 March, which had crossed the Garonne at Pinsaguel and the Ariège at Cintegabelle, fell back yesterday morning and has largely recrossed the Garonne. I still do not know if it will go up this river to cross it again at Carbonne and head directly for Pamiers; but this movement, which would be pointless, seems very doubtful to me. The reports I am receiving lead me, on the contrary, to suppose that the enemy is preparing to make a crossing between the mouth of the Tarn and Toulouse. In any case, I am preparing to give battle to them from whichever side they come, and I am putting the city of Toulouse in a state of defense.

If you had nothing to fear from Spain, and if you had the possibility of reinforcing General Lafitte in the department of Ariège; even if you thought it necessary to go there in person with all

your available forces, this diversion would be of the greatest effect, especially if you pushed the head of your column towards Saint-Martory and Saint-Gaudens via Saint-Girons. It is even likely that it would enable me to resume the offensive, for it would coincide with the one that the Army of the Gironde, which is due to assemble at Libourne, about which I had the honor of speaking to you in my letter of the 29th, will undoubtedly produce. But I repeat, this is naturally dependent on your situation, and I have no doubt that, if the move seems useful and practicable to you, you will undertake it immediately.

I believe, however, that I must warn you that rumors are circulating among the enemy that they are planning to march on Lyon. If this were the case, it would become essential that our operations be coordinated; and, consequently, I would ask you to be kind enough to inform me of your plans.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.



No. 117

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to
Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra.*

5 April 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

In my letter of the 3rd of this month, I gave you a feeling that the enemy was preparing to cross the Garonne below Toulouse. The crossing actually took place yesterday morning before daybreak at Granada. The advance guard of the enemy army immediately took the road to Toulouse: its outposts stopped at Fenouillet in front of mine. I don't know what happened near Montauban; but, as we are also in a state of defense at that point, I don't believe anything untoward has occurred there. Moreover, I am ready to give battle to the enemy; and it is likely that the engagement would have begun, if the bad weather had not prevented it.

I would like to know what arrangements you deem appropriate based on the proposal contained in my letter of the 3rd. It is time to act; and I believe that we can obtain very great advantages if our operations are coordinated. I have written to General Lafitte to gather all the troops at his disposal and to conduct reconnaissance on the Haute Garonne and the road from Saint-Gaudens to Toulouse, to intercept this communication and harm the enemy.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.



No. 118

*Letter from Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra, to
Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia.*

6 April 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

Battalion Commander Mrozinski gave me your letter of the 29th, and I received the ones you wrote to me on the 31st and 3rd of this month. The situation in Spain does not allow me to move far from the borders. The English and the Spanish are uniting all their forces in Catalonia. Barcelona is closely surrounded by eighteen thousand men. I have been informed that the English regiment of Dillon has been withdrawn from Cartagena and has landed at Tarragona. The garrison of Peniscola is reduced to seventy or eighty men; the explosion of a powder magazine killed the governor, the general staff, and several soldiers. The siege has been ongoing for three months. Six thousand men blockade Saguntum. Tortosa, whose needs are becoming very pressing, is attacked by the entire Second Army, ten thousand men and three hundred horses strong. General Copons y Navia has fifteen to eighteen thousand men under his command, with whom he threatens to invade.

I occupy the banks of the Ter, and I contain considerable forces through my garrisons and my position on the Pyrenees. However, as soon as I learned of the movement the English had made in the Ariège, I hastened to bring a portion of the small troops I have left closer to Perpignan; I had Narbonne put into a state of defense, and I instructed General Pouget at Carcassonne to push 150 horses to scout the Ariège and communicate with Toulouse, a service he will continue to perform. But circumstances do not allow me to advance to the Haute Garonne without exposing the rest of southern France and renouncing the results of the negotiations begun for the return of our garrisons and the surrender of the fortresses.

You seem to believe that I will be rendering a great service by obtaining the return of these garrisons. Perhaps you would not think so if you were well aware of the number of enemies the fortresses occupy. Half of the troops I left there are composed of conscripts, as you did at Bayonne.

If the English execute the movement they announce on Lyon, I will have no other course to take than to gather the small number of our battalions at Narbonne, hold there as long as possible, and withdraw to Béziers, which I am also having put in a state of defense, and finally to Montpellier, thus covering all the departments of the South that are not invaded, and joining forces with the army of Lyon.

There are three marches from Figueres to Perpignan, two from that city to Narbonne, and as many to reach Carcassonne. You will judge by this distance to be covered, how little movement I could make at this point with the forces, I might say insignificant, that I command.

King Ferdinand has passed Barcelona; he slept on the 31st at San Feliu, near that city. The English, the Spanish, and the Sicilians were under arms to receive him. It is certain that the former will use everything to ignite civil war in Spain. The Cortes fear the presence of the King and have published a furious manifesto, of which I am sending you a rough translation. They want to force the nation to go to war and compel Spain not to sign the peace treaty without the allies; thus, the King will be forced to decide for war.

This state of affairs is all the more unfortunate since, reduced daily by the formation of new garrisons, I now command only one division. I am forced to leave three thousand men at Figueres, by an order of 19 March, and I must consider Perpignan. You will be able to judge from this statement how few means I will have to stop the English; but, in this case, I am counting heavily on the powerful diversion you will be able to create behind the enemy lines, while the Army of the Dordogne will itself be able to cross the river, liberate Bordeaux, and cover your right.

According to the latest news from Valencia, our army has once again advanced towards Lyon, and reinforcements arriving from Italy give hope of seeing the offensive resume soon.

I intend to go to Narbonne tomorrow to check on the progress of the works and the armaments.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF ALBUFÉRA.

No. 119

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to
Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra.*

7 April 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

Adjutant Commander Ricard delivered to me this evening the letter you did me the honor of writing on the 6th; I only retained him long enough to converse with him and reply to you. This senior officer will inform you of my situation and that of the enemy; he will also explain the reasons why, despite the observations you took the trouble to submit to me, I desire that you create a diversion towards the Upper Garonne, either actually or by demonstration.

I am determined to give battle to the enemy near Toulouse, regardless of the superiority of their forces. I am fortifying a position backing onto the city and the canal, which provides me with an entrenched camp capable of defense, whether the enemy directs their attack by the Montauban road or by the Castelnau road. I hope that in four days all the works will be completed. This evening, I had the most important ones armed.

Mr. Ricard was with me when I received the unfortunate news that the enemy has entered Paris. This great misfortune strengthens my determination to defend Toulouse, whatever may happen.

The preservation of this place, which contains establishments of all kinds, is of the utmost importance to us.

But if unfortunately, I were forced to leave it, the movements I would make would naturally bring me closer to you. In this case, you would not be able to sustain yourself at Perpignan, because the enemy army would inevitably follow the direction I had taken. It is therefore in the interest of the service, even in light of your situation, that you create a diversion on the Upper Garonne, by the shortest route; the effect it produces will be proportionate to the means you employ.

The enemy seems surprised by my determination to defend Toulouse. In the four days since he crossed the Garonne, he has made no move: perhaps the bad weather is the cause. His army is between Lespinasse and Saint-Jory. He has sent a detachment on the road to Montauban, but I have not learned that he has made any attempt on that city. He also has a large observation corps in front of the Saint-Cyprien bridgehead. I do not claim, however, that he has given up on the plan to attack me; I believe, on the contrary, that tomorrow, or on the first day, he will march on me.

I will await with the greatest impatience your notification, Marshal, of the decision you have made, based on the contents of my letter, and the observations that Adjutant-Commander Ricard has been instructed to communicate to you.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.



No. 120

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to the Duke
of Feltre, Minister of War, on the Battle of Toulouse.*

Toulouse, 11 April 1814.

Monsieur Duke,

I had the honour of informing Your Excellency that I would not leave Toulouse without giving battle to the enemy; yesterday it took place. The army was in position, the right supported by the Hers, and the left by the Canal du Languedoc, up to its mouth; the bridgehead of the Faubourg Saint-Cyprien was also occupied. Assuming that the main enemy attack would be directed at the Calvinet plateau, I had established some field works there, and I formed four divisions under their protection. At six o'clock in the morning, we saw the enemy army move in several columns: two infantry divisions emerged from Daurade and Périole; they followed the left bank of the Hers to reach the foothills of the plateau that descends to Les Bordes; two other divisions attacked brigade of General Baron de Saint-Pol, which occupied the small plateau of Lapujade; and two other divisions attacked the works of the Minimes Bridge, on the canal, and the bridge on the Blagnac road. Independently of these divisions, a strong reserve of infantry and cavalry was visible, ready to move to all points of attack.

General Baron de Saint-Pol's brigade, part of Villatte's division, withstood the engagement perfectly and delayed the enemy's movement; but as it had no other objective to fulfill, it fell back in very good order to its position.

The two enemy divisions along the left bank of the Hers had already pushed their heads up to near the Bordes bridge, on the Caraman road, which I had destroyed, as well as that of Aiguá, on the Verfeil road. These divisions were marching along the flank in three lines; they consequently held a large area. The opportunity seemed favorable to me to compromise them; to this end, I gave the order to General Taupin, whose division was formed on the plateau, to advance with it at full speed on the enemy, to cut his line and capture all who had so imprudently committed themselves. This division was supported by a brigade of the D'Armagnac Division; it was supported by the works on the right of the line, in which General Dauture was trapped with the Ninth Light Infantry; finally, General Soult received the order to send a cavalry regiment to cut off the communication of this enemy column, while two other regiments were engaged on the left. These dispositions promised the finest result; seven or eight thousand English or Portuguese were to be destroyed or captured, if the Fourth Infantry Division had launched itself as expected; but the ardor it showed at first slowed down; instead of approaching the enemy, as I had ordered, it pressed on the right, wanted to take up position, giving the enemy time to form and march against it. From then on, it only concerned itself with its defense, fell back on the work that the Ninth Light Infantry Regiment was defending, and drew this regiment into its movement. At that moment, General Taupin was mortally wounded, and Adjutant Gasquet, who was acting as Brigadier General, received a very severe contusion.

The enemy general's mistake of so imprudently committing two divisions to the right of our army was to prove fatal and result in the loss of part of his own; but the indecision of General Taupin's division turned the error to his advantage. From that moment on, the attacks changed direction; the enemy reinforced his left, established himself on the plateau, and successively attacked the other works from the sides that had not yet been completed. The Mas des Augustins fort was taken and retaken twice; the Scots suffered a very heavy loss there. Major General Count Harispe, who commanded at this point, had a foot blown off by a cannonball; Brigadier General Baurot also had a leg blown off; General Lamorandière was also wounded.

While this was happening on the right, the center and the left were gaining advantages. Two enemy masses, preceded by a swarm of skirmishers, attempted to attack the position head-on; they were swiftly repulsed with very considerable losses. Two battalions, one from Darricau's division, which sallied across the bridge at the Matabiau Gate, and the other from D'Armagnac's division, which emerged from the rear of the position, completed the enemy's rout and drove them back more than a quarter of a league, where they rallied.

Count d'Erlon, with the First Infantry Division, was tasked with defending the fortified bridges at the Matabiau Gate, at the Minimes, on the road to Montauban, and at the canal junction, on the road to Blagnac. The former was not attacked. The enemy had directed forces at the latter; but he abandoned his attempt when he saw that the troops there were impregnable. The Thirty-first Light Infantry was defending the Minims Convent. At the third bridge, the enemy attempted to launch a sudden attack but was repulsed with enormous losses. An English regiment, nine

hundred strong, was reduced to one hundred and fifty, and its colonel was captured. Our soldiers, not having time to charge, wounded many enemies with stones.

I had been forced to withdraw troops from the Saint-Cyprien bridgehead. Count Reille, who commanded there, evacuated the first line and limited his defense to the suburb's walls. During the day, the enemy presented eleven or twelve English and Portuguese battalions and two batteries, whose fire was immediately extinguished.

The battle continued until nightfall on the Calvinet plateau, and the enemy extended their left as far as the country house called *Courige* and the Montaudan plateau; but the losses they had suffered and the resistance they encountered at all points slowed their attacks. The two main forts at Calvinet were defended until five o'clock in the evening and then evacuated. The Forty-fifth Line Battalion, commanded by M. Guerrier, covered itself in glory by defending them; it had only one hundred men fit to fight when it withdrew. All the guns' horses were killed, and it was difficult to get ammunition there. Lieutenant General Clauzel, who commanded the right during the day, held his position on the plateau in front of Cambon and Labourdette, covering the junction of the Caraman and Verfeil roads, and relying on the works of the Montaudan bridge, which were defended by a brigade of the reserve division, under the command of General Travot. Night brought an end to the fighting.

I still don't have an exact idea of our losses; from the reports I've received, I estimate them at two thousand men out of action. Unfortunately, they are considerable among the generals and officers. Major General Taupin died of his wound; Major General Harispe had part of his foot blown off; General Baurot also had his leg blown off. General Berlier and Adjutant Commander Gasquet, who served as brigadier general, were wounded, but more lightly, as were the colonel of the Tenth Line Infantry, and Major Morlincour, the artillery battalion commander. He commanded the batteries of the main works; one could not have behaved with more valor.

The enemy's losses must have been very considerable; throughout the day, they fired at half-range on their masses or columns. The artillery consumed 8,000 cannon shots and all its grapeshot; we constantly had the advantage of fire. I cannot praise highly enough the service of the artillery, as well as the zeal of Major General Tirlet, who commands it, and that of the officers and gunners under his command. The losses this branch has suffered in personnel are quite considerable; it has also lost many horses.

I was fully supported by MM. Lieutenant Generals Baron Clauzel, Count d'Erlon and Count Reille, as well as by Count Gazan, Chief of Staff. Division Generals Count Harispe, Villatte, D'Armagnac and Darricau fought well; they constantly kept their troops in the most perfect order. Generals Travot and Maransin led their troops well: the former commands a reserve division, formed of conscripts, with which I was also pleased.

I will gladly mention Brigadier Generals Baron de Saint-Pol, Menou, Fririon, Berlier, Rey, Dauture, Baurot, and Barbot, as well as Adjutants Lescur and Gasquet, both serving as brigadier generals; Adjutant Jeannet, Deputy Chief of Staff; Colonel Fontenay, of the artillery; Colonel Michaux, of the engineers; Battalion Commander Plazanet, and other engineering officers, whose dedication is always remarkable.

I will also make special mention of the officers attached to me, most of whom had their horses killed. Squadron Commander Choiseuil, Battalion Commander Beaudus, Captains Bonneval, d'Albe, Marie, and Bourjolly, all my aides-de-camp, Captains Gallabert and Gallinier, who serve as aides-de-camps, have deserved to be mentioned by their conduct.

Today, I remain in position; if the enemy attacks me, I will defend myself. I have a great need to provide various replacements before putting the army on the march; but I believe that tomorrow night I will be forced to leave Toulouse and maneuver. It is likely that I will direct my movements in such a way as to rally the troops of Marshal d'Albuféra.

I have the honor to ask Your Excellency to accept, etc.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.



No. 121

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to
Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra.*

11 April 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

As I intimated to you in the letter I had the honor of writing to you yesterday, I am obliged to withdraw from Toulouse, and I fear I will be forced to fight my way through to Baziège, where the enemy has just directed a column to cut off my access. Tomorrow, I will take up position at Villefranche; for I very much hope that the obstacle will not prevent me from crossing, and the day after tomorrow I will withdraw to Castelnaudary. If I can stop there, I will do so; if not, I will take up position on the Aude at Carcassonne, to give you time to make your arrangements.

I have had the honor of proposing a diversion to you on the Upper Garonne. The situation has arisen where it is no longer possible to delay taking a decision, otherwise we will inevitably find ourselves reunited on the Mediterranean coast near Béziers. This can still be avoided; but we can only achieve it by promptly uniting all of your troops (after you have ensured the security of the fortresses) with those of the army I have the honor to command. I expressly propose this to you, and I ask you to inform me immediately of your decision.

If you decide to combine our operations, it will no doubt seem appropriate to head immediately, with all of your forces, to Quillan, from where you could assemble at Carcassonne, and we would immediately move forward via the Ariège to reestablish the theater of war in the Upper Garonne, supported by the Pyrenees. This movement would be decisive, and I have no doubt that by saving the south of France, it would force the enemy to recall all the troops they have

deployed on both banks of the Garonne; thus, Count Decaen would be able to retake Bordeaux, and he could soon create a diversion in our favor.

I am sending Captain Bonneval, my aide-de-camp, to you; he will inform you of my situation and bring me your reply immediately. I earnestly hope that it will be favorable to my proposal, and, in any case, that it will inform me of the measures you deem appropriate to take.

I propose that we march on Quillan, believing that you will be there as soon as I arrive at Carcassonne. Moreover, this direction seems shorter to me, even for marching on Mirepoix and Pamiers; but, if you take Narbonne, I beg you to let me know.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.



No. 122

*Letter from Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra, to Marshal
Soult, Duke of Dalmatia.*

12 April 1814.

Monsieur Marshal,

This evening, the Chevalier de Bonneval delivered to me your dispatch of the 11th, in which you informed me of your retreat to Villefranche and Carcassonne. I had all the more reason to be surprised, given that your letter of the 10th informed me of the opposite. Considering the course you propose to me, to head with all my forces to Quillan, to reunite at Carcassonne, to push forward through the Ariège, and to reestablish the theater of war on the upper Garonne, with support from the Pyrenees, I see first of all that you have been strangely misled about the road that leads from Perpignan to Quillan, since barely mules can pass there, and that I would be obliged to operate in poor country, without artillery or carriages. Secondly, how can we advance through the Ariège, and reestablish the theater of war on the upper Garonne, while the roads are so difficult that General Hill almost lost his artillery there for having engaged there? What support can the Pyrenees, which the Spanish are going to cross in force, offer us? Finally, where will we get our ammunition and supplies, and what communications would we maintain with the interior of France, once we have left the main road to Montpellier, by which the enemy would send troops to link up with the Austrians? I am far from believing, as you do, that the movement you propose would save the south of France, and force the enemy to withdraw all the troops he has sent to the Garonne. On the contrary, I believe that it would complete the disorganization and ruin of the few troops we have left. Nor do I think that this movement could in any way facilitate the operations of General Decaen on Bordeaux. I base my opinion on various letters that you have written to me, and by which you have constantly indicated to me that the superiority of the enemy in infantry was as 3 to 1, and in cavalry as 14 to 2. Certainly, Mr. Duke, such superiority commands us to adopt a defensive system, which allows us to conserve ammunition and to bring in food.

I am aware of all the disadvantages of consolidating two corps on the same road, and I would consider it highly advantageous if you could adopt, for the army you command, the route leading from Carcassonne to Saint-Pons, while I occupy Béziers, which I am fortifying. By this movement, you could draw supplies from the Tarn department, and we would be so close that the enemy would have difficulty making any serious attack on our positions. I only make this proposal to you to avoid the congestion of two armies operating on a single road.

I am specifically entrusted with the command of the Ninth Military Division; I would like to conserve its resources, and I would like the extraordinary commissioner, Pelet de la Lozère, to be exclusively responsible for distributing them according to our needs and the strength of our armies. I urge Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, to withdraw the requisitions he has made in Hérault and Gard, since, with the Seventh and Eighth Divisions free, he can sustain his army much better than we can.

I am going to Narbonne tomorrow; I expect to have 3,000 men there on the 14th, and the rest of my infantry by night. Thus, as I instructed Colonel Ricard to inform you, I hope to have withdrawn all my small forces from Spain and Roussillon by the 15th; that same day, we will be able to converge to consult on the best course of action.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF ALBUFERA.

END OF VOLUME ONE



ERRATA.



- Page 83, line 6, his reteat, *read* his retreat.
- Page 88, line 8, se sauvèrent, *read* were running away.
- Page 114, line 15, Tavalera, *read* Talavera.
- Page 133, line 2, Monbrun, *read* Montbrun.
- Page 135, line 17, du goble, *read* of the globe.

