

Translated by Greg Gorsuch
Part 9

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 1810

II

The French were masters of Andalusia, and the Spanish armies were annihilated on almost all points. England, discouraged by the general bad success of the war, and dissatisfied with the loss of her military forces in the island of Zealand, was inclined to withdraw from the fight. Finally, Napoleon, by the happy issue of the war in Austria and his marriage with the Archduchess Marie-Louise, was going to be able to act in Spain with the greater part of his forces. Everything therefore made the French troops in Spain foresee an imminent end to their labors. This opinion took on new force when an Imperial decree appeared on 17 April, which ordered the assembly of a considerable army in the environs of Salamanca, to attempt a third time the conquest of Portugal. This army was formed of seven divisions of the Second, Sixth and Eighth Corps, and a cavalry reserve of six regiments of dragoons, offering in all seventy thousand men present under arms, all old, seasoned soldiers. Marshal Masséna, Prince of Essling, arrived at Salamanca on 28 May to take command. A Ninth Corps of about nineteen thousand men, under the command of General Drouet, was to assemble at Valladolid to form the reserve. General Seras, with fourteen thousand men, covered the right on the Escla, from Benavente to Leon, and communicated with General Bonet, who guarded Asturias and the province of Santander with nine thousand men. Marshal Bessières was charged with occupying Biscay, Navarre, old Castile, and ensuring communications with sixteen thousand men of the Young Guard, commanded by General Dorsenne, and two rearguard divisions, commanded by Generals Reille and Caffarelli.

After the battle of Talavera, Lord Wellington, counting little on the assistance of the Spaniards, and foreseeing well that sooner or later he would be attacked in Portugal, had taken advantage of the rest he had had to study the country and organize his means of defense. From the month of October 1809, he had worked on the imposing lines of Torres-Vedras, around Lisbon. On the flanks of these lines, he had Abrantès fortified on the right, which assured him by its bridge an outlet on the right bank of the Tagus; and, on the left, he had the fort of Peniche put in a state of defense, which protected a landing point on the coast of Vimeiro. He chose, moreover, several positions on the tributaries of the Mondego, which he covered with numerous works; and, to

better ensure his success, he made arrangements to surround the French army with a vast desert when it advanced, forcing all the inhabitants to leave their homes at the first signal, and to burn what they could not carry away, in order to withdraw behind the lines of Torres-Vedras.

The English army had been increased to twenty-seven thousand men and reinforced by thirty thousand Portuguese in the pay of England, and commanded by English officers; several regiments of these troops were even embedded in the English divisions. Wellington occupied, with thirty-eight thousand men, a strong position extending from Guarda to Pinhel, behind the Côa. His right was covered by the Spanish division of General la Carrera, in the valley of the Tagus, and in the defiles of the Sierra del Gata. An advance guard of five thousand men, under the command of General Craufurd, was posted on the Azaba in front of his line, about halfway from Almeida to Ciudad-Rodrigo, and pushed frequent reconnaissances on the Águeda. General Hill was at Portalegre, on the left bank of the Tagus, with a corps of thirteen thousand men, of whom five thousand were English. He linked up with the Spanish army of the Marquis de la Romana, twenty thousand strong and posted near Badajoz. Another corps of two thousand English and eight thousand Portuguese, under the command of Major General Leith, formed the reserve at Thomar. In addition, the Portuguese regency had fifteen thousand regular troops, forty-six thousand militia organized into regiments, and mass levies, or national guards, known under the name of *ordenanzas*, armed with rifles, scythes or pikes, whose number, estimated at three hundred thousand men, was actually composed of the entire virile population of Portugal.

Marshal Masséna was to enter Portugal by the valley of the Mondego, in order to avoid the obstacles that General Junot had encountered in 1807, by advancing by the valley of the Tagus¹. He opened the campaign in the month of June with the siege of Ciudad-Rodrigo. (*See the account of this siege, Volume III.*) Marshal Ney was charged, with the Sixth Corps, with this operation; and General Junot advanced on the Águeda with the Eighth Corps to cover it. General Reynier remained with the Second Corps between the Guadiana and the Tagus, to support the left and to watch, on the border of Alentejo, the English corps of General Hill, and the Spanish army of the Marquis de la Romana.¹⁶⁴

Ciudad Rodrigo fell on the 10th of July. Lord Wellington did nothing to relieve this place, not wishing to compromise his troops, still unseasoned, and to depart from the system of defensive warfare which he had adopted. The Second Corps, after having defeated, on the 5th of July, at Jerez de los Caballeros, a corps of eight thousand Spaniards under the command of Mendizabál, crossed the Tagus at Barca de Alcoite, and came to take up position towards Coria, supporting its left at the Tagus, and threatening to turn the right of the English army. By a corresponding movement, General Hill crossed the Tagus at Vila Velha, and went behind Castelo Branco, linking up on its left with Lord Wellington's army at Guarda.

On the 21st of July, the Sixth Corps, posted at Gallegos, in front of Ciudad Rodrigo, began its offensive movement on Almeida. The English vanguard, under the command of General Craufurd, was beaten and thrown back beyond the Côa; Almeida was immediately invested and besieged soon after. (*See the account of this siege, Volume III.*)

¹ See supporting documents, no. 44.

Massena, judging it advisable, before entering Portugal, to occupy all the fortified posts which were on his flanks, and to threaten the enemy on various points, in order to keep him in uncertainty as to the direction of his further movements, gave the order, on 27 July, to General Reynier to move the Second Corps from Coria to Zarza la Mayor, threatening to move by Castelo Branco on Abrantès. A detachment had to occupy Alcántara to watch the two banks of the Tagus, and to contain the English corps of General Hill, as well as a Spanish division under the command of Charles O'Donnell, which from Alburquerque had approached the river. Another detachment, formed of the light cavalry brigade of General Soult and the thirty-first light, went to Penamacor, which it entered on 31 July. This small place, situated at the junction of communications at the head of southern Beira, was armed with fifteen pieces of cannon, and capable of forming an excellent post. The next day, two battalions entered Monsanto, a small town situated in a position as strong as it was important, and whose castle, built on high rocks, was considered impregnable; it was armed with four cannons, and provided with ammunition of all kinds.¹⁶⁶

General Montbrun was charged, with the reserve cavalry, to guard the frontier between Alfaiates and Almeida, to cover the road to Ciudad-Rodrigo, and to link the right of the second corps to the rest of the army.

The Eighth Corps, under the orders of General Junot, was echeloned between the Tormes and the Águeda, threatening the province of Trás-os-Montes, and holding itself ready to debouch on Castel Rodrigo or Almeida to support the Sixth Corps. Towards the extreme right, General Seras, who guarded the line of the Esla, from Benavente to Zamora, went on 29 July to Puebla de Sanabria, a small town important by its position on an outlet from Portugal, and on a line of communication from Galicia to Extremadura. A body of three thousand Spaniards stood there in observation; but it fled precipitately on the approach of the French troops. General Seras seized the place and left a small garrison there.

Almeida surrendered on 28 August. Lord Wellington, who had remained obstinately in observation behind this place², then withdrew to the impregnable position of the Alva, on the left bank of the Mondego, where ten heavily embanked tributaries present as many good defensive lines.

Already the French army was experiencing the greatest difficulty in subsisting. The country which borders the frontier between the Douro and the Tagus is extremely wild. It had been ravaged the previous year by the Spanish armies; and the stay of the French troops during the sieges of Ciudad-Rodrigo and Almeida had finished exhausting it. On the other hand, all the reports confirmed the system of devastation adopted by the English for the defense of Portugal, and it was to be expected that the communications would be intercepted by the partisan corps, after a few days' march. It would therefore have been necessary to be able to carry provisions and ammunition for two or three months. But all that could be done was to distribute a fortnight's worth of biscuit to the soldiers, and to carry about the same amount on carriages. The artillery had already lost more than fifteen hundred horses through fatigue. It had to reduce its equipment to eight pieces per division instead of twelve. The ammunition caissons were barely sufficient for eight days' fighting. The train of military crews had only two hundred caissons;

² See supporting documents, no. 45.

and part had to be used for the service of the engineers, who had only one caisson of tools per company of sappers. This small crew was still too considerable to travel across mountains, whose paths, most often, were not suitable for artillery. Brigades of pack mules were organized, according to the custom of the country adopted by the English; but only a very small number could be formed.

These preparations detained the army nineteen days under the walls of Almeida. Masséna was also awaiting the arrival of the Ninth Corps, which was to secure his rear and cover Salamanca; but, learning that this corps was not yet organized, he left behind General Gardanne with a brigade of dragoons, and placed under his command some infantry troops of General Seras, so that he could rally the men leaving the hospitals, free the frontier from the enemy partisans, and facilitate communications as much as possible. The siege equipage, the heavy baggage, the depots, the regimental stores and six thousand sick were left at Ciudad-Rodrigo and Almeida, under the guard of two thousand four hundred men distributed between these two places.

Finally, on 15 September, Masséna set out on Lisbon; but instead of following the road where Lord Wellington awaited him in his formidable positions on the left bank of the Mondego, he took the road to Coimbra by the right bank of that river. The roads were so bad that, on the first day, all the horses were unshod. On 18 September, the army was assembled at Viseu, which the inhabitants had abandoned. Masséna was obliged to stop two days in this town to wait for his artillery³. Lord Wellington took advantage of this delay to cross the Mondego and march briskly on the mountains of Alcobaça, where he directed at the same time the corps of Generals Hill and Leith by the road to Espinhel. He hoped in this way to cover Coimbra and the road to Lisbon, by taking up position with all his forces united on the plateau of Bussaco, situated at the summit of this chain, three hundred feet above the valleys which surround it. This important junction took place on September 26th at the moment when the French army arrived before the position of Bussaco. Lord Wellington deployed his army over a league and a half in length, blocking, on his left, the road from Mortágua to Coimbra, which passes over the mountain very near a convent of Minims named Sako, and, on his right, that of San-António do Cântaro closer to the Mondego. He had with him fifty thousand men, of whom twenty-seven thousand were English, and eighty pieces of cannon. A part of his infantry, under the orders of General Hill, and all his cavalry, formed his reserve, and remained masked on the rear slope of the mountain.

The French army numbered sixty-two thousand men. Masséna, too confident in his fortune, led, on the 27th, at daybreak, a frontal attack by the road of the convent and that of San-António, the only accessible directions. The elevation of the site occupied by the enemy did not allow the French artillery to support the attacking columns. On the left, General Reynier, who advanced by the road of San-António, had a moment of success; the slopes of the mountain, less steep on this side, allowed him to arrive with a division as far as the plateau. But his troops, out of breath and already tired, had barely begun to form there, when the English reserves, supported by a large artillery, marched towards them and forced them to descend the mountain with a significant loss. General Simon was killed, and General Ferey was wounded. The attack on the right, led by Marshal Ney, was no more successful; the intrepid Foy and the brave Graindorge were wounded. We fought all day without result. We had eighteen hundred men killed and nearly three thousand wounded, including a large number of officers.

³ See supporting documents, no. 46.

Masséna, realizing a little late that the position of the Alcobaça was impregnable, maneuvered the next day to flank it. At nightfall, he turned to his right to take another path that a peasant indicated, better than the one that had just cost so much, and which led to Coimbra by Avelãs de Cima and Sardão. On the 29th, the mountain was turned. Lord Wellington did nothing to prevent this flank movement; but withdrawing to Coimbra, he recrossed the Mondego there and continued his retreat on Lisbon. He was followed by two to three hundred thousand Portuguese families who willingly or by force had abandoned their homes.

The French army entered Coimbra on October 1st; this city, with a population of twenty thousand souls, was deserted. Masséna left his sick, his wounded, and a small battalion to guard them there. On October 4th, he marched on Lisbon. Three days later, the unfortunates abandoned at Coimbra were taken and dragged to Oporto by the eastern militias commanded by Colonel Trant.

On October 9th, the French army arrived at the foot of the lines of Torres-Vedras. By the strangeness of which one would seek in vain an example in the other wars of the continent, Masséna had learned only at Leiria of the existence of these formidable lines before which he was going to come up against, and on which Lord Wellington had been working for ten months. After a fairly lively fight at Alenquer, the Second Corps established itself at Vila Franca; the Sixth at Ota; the Eighth at Sobral, having a division of dragoons at Alventre. General Montbrun's cavalry went to the Zêzere to keep the garrison of Abrantès in check, and to gather all the boats that could be found on the Tagus. The French army was already in a very critical situation⁴. Since Almeida it had only passed through deserted towns and villages. The inhabitants, in retreating, had taken all their livestock, destroyed the mills, poured wine into the streets, burned the grain, and had even broken the furniture.

The position occupied by the English was formed of three fortified lines established on the foothills of Monte Agraço, located four leagues north of Lisbon, where the chain of mountains ends which separate the tributaries of the Tagus from those which flow directly into the Ocean. These foothills thus backed by the central chain form natural entrenchments to which the valleys serve as ditches, and whose extremities lean against the Tagus and the sea. The first two lines were each eight to ten leagues in length; the third, serving as a redoubt, covered the port of Saint-Julien, located a league below Lisbon, and where, in the event of a reverse, the embarkation was to take place. The front of these lines was defended by natural or artificial escarpments, by floods, by abatis, and by one hundred and twenty-six redoubts or forts surrounded by ditches, palisades, and armed with three hundred and forty pieces of cannon. Several military roads favored the movements of the troops behind these lines, and a system of signals gave means of rapid communication at all points. Twenty vessels and three or four hundred transports, with a freight of twenty-four thousand tons, were stationed in the Tagus, ready to receive the English troops in case of retreat. Soon Admiral Berkeley, who commanded the fleet, doubled this number of transports, in order to embark also the Portuguese troops, and those of the inhabitants who would like to emigrate.

The Anglo-Portuguese army had received new reinforcements. It had as reserve an English corps forming the garrison of Lisbon, the bourgeois guard of that city, a fine corps of marines

⁴ See supporting documents, no. 47.

recently arrived from England, the sailors of the fleet, the Portuguese heavy artillery corps, the militia and the ordenanzas, and two Spanish divisions that the Marquis de la Romana had brought from Estremadura. In total, Lord Wellington's army, in the lines of Torres-Vedras, amounted to one hundred and thirty thousand men, of whom more than seventy thousand were regular and available troops. Such a mass of soldiers, entrenched in such formidable positions, having behind them the spacious and safe port of Lisbon, with the support and assistance of the maritime power and wealth of England, offers to the memory of men one of the most marvelous cases that can be encountered in the military annals of nations.

Masséna still had fifty-five thousand men; but, having become more circumspect since the affair of Bussaco, he believed himself too weak to force the English lines, and limited himself to observing them. He thus remained a month in inaction, without stores, without communications with France, at the extremity of a ravaged and depopulated country over an area of seventy leagues; while the English, masters of the sea, from where they supplied themselves from all points of the globe, lacked nothing. Reduced finally to the last extremity by hunger and misery, he saw himself forced to approach a less exhausted region where he could support his army. Towards the end of October, he sent the sick and all the baggage to Santarem and detached General Loison on the Zêzere with his division and the sappers. On 31 October, General Loison crossed this river near Punhete, which he seized and where he had a bridge built. He detached a column of four hundred infantrymen and two hundred dragoons to Abrantès to reconnoiter it. General Foy followed this column; and, keeping with him only a weak escort, he pushed towards Penamacor, and arrived on 8 November at Ciudad-Rodrigo, from where he left on post for Paris, in order to inform Napoleon of the situation of the army, and to ask him for instructions⁵. General Loison cleared the valley of the Zêzere and threw a second bridge over this river at Martinchel. These arrangements having been made, Masséna began, on 14 November, his retrograde march behind the Rio-Mayor, and came to take up quarters at Santarem, Torres-Novas and Leiria. From then on, he only occupied himself with collecting at Punhete all the materials necessary to build a bridge over the Tagus, wanting to penetrate into the Alentejo, a rich and still intact region on the southern bank of the river, which offered him immense resources, and where he would have had the advantage of being able to link up on his left with the French troops stationed in the southern provinces of Spain. General Eblé, commanding the artillery, employed the pontoon builders and all the workers of the regiments in the construction of the boats and their rigging; but, for this work, he had to have even the tools necessary to cut down the first trees made. General Lazowski, commanding the engineers, was charged with fortifying Punhete with a double bridgehead over the Zêzere, in the event that a corps would remain on the right bank of the Tagus, to operate by the road to Abrantès. He also undertook immense works to cover Santarem, where army stores, a large hospital and mills were established.

General Gardanne, to whom General Foy had informed Ciudad-Rodrigo that General Loison had crossed the Zêzere, went to meet him on 20 November, with a column of five thousand men of marching troops, by the road from Castelo Branco to Abrantès. He advanced to within four leagues of the latter place; but, stopped by the Codes, which was not fordable, and deceived by the false reports of a Portuguese deserter, he believed that the French army was in full retreat, and returned to Castelo Branco. This column was reduced by hunger and fatigue to the most terrible state. It had lost four hundred men dead or lost, and three hundred horses.

⁵ See supporting documents, No. 48.

In the month of December, General Drouet, commanding the Ninth Corps, after having joined the column of General Gardanne to the Second Division of his corps, six thousand strong, and commanded by General Conroux, went, by the left bank of the Mondego, from Almeida to Leiria, where he arrived on the 26th, and made his junction with the Sixth Corps which was posted there. Masséna distributed the marching troops in their respective regiments and retained at Leiria General Drouet with the Division Conroux which was charged with ensuring the communications of the army, and to link up with the First Division of the Ninth Corps which had remained under the orders of General Claparède at Trancoso and Pinhel, to contain the Portuguese bands of General Silveira.

While Masséna was fighting in Portugal against the difficulties of his situation, the other army corps were waging a detailed war in Spain in the different provinces where they were scattered.

Marshal Victor continued the blockade of Cadiz with the First Corps. This city, seated on a rock located more than a league out to sea, is only accessible from the land side by a very long and very narrow strip of sand which is part of the island of Léon. This island is itself separated from the continent by the arm of the Sancti-Petri, three leagues long, two to three hundred meters wide, and bordered by immense salt marshes. The bridge of Zuazo on the Sancti-Petri, the only communication of the continent with the island of Leon and Cadiz, was broken. The opposite bank bristled with entrenchments and batteries, and defended by thirty thousand men, including eight thousand English under the command of General Graham. Eight Spanish ships and eight frigates, coming from Ferrol, four English ships and two frigates, were cruising at the entrance to the bay. The port also contained nearly two hundred vessels of all sizes, several of which were built for the defense of the island of Léon and the harbor.

In this formidable position, the attack of such imposing forces would have required very great means. Marshal Victor had barely twenty thousand men, and his line offered a development of nearly ten leagues, from the tower of Bermejo on the left, to Rota, on the right, where he had to defend the coast and the mouth of the Guadalquivir, to facilitate the arrival by water of the convoys of artillery and munitions which he drew from Seville. On the other hand, he had been obliged to detach an observation corps to Medina-Sidonia under the orders of General Latour-Maubourg to cover his rear, collect provisions and open, by Ronda, a communication with General Sebastiani who was observing the frontiers of Murcia. Marshal Victor therefore decided to remain on the defensive, and he had his line entrenched at all points. The fort of Santa Catalina, at the entrance to the bay and opposite Cadiz, was enlarged and armed with thirty guns, with the aim of keeping the enemy fleet at bay. The Isle de Trocadero, whose projection towards the island of Léon forms, at the bottom of the bay, the inner harbor and the port, was defended by numerous batteries. The siege of the fort of Matagorda, at the tip of this peninsula, where the English had taken up post, was undertaken. This fort, with that of Puntales which faces it on the isthmus of Cadiz, defends the entrance to the strait. After more than two months of work in a watery terrain, several batteries armed with thirty-six guns were established near this fort, which crushed it and forced the enemy to evacuate it on 22 April. The occupation of this fort allowed two pontoons, *the Castille* and *the Argonaute*, anchored in the harbor, and each containing seven or eight hundred French prisoners, to come

successively to run aground on the beach where the crews were saved despite the fire of the Spanish and the English.

Immediately after the capture of the fort of Matagorda, the fort Napoleon was built to the right of the mouth of the Rio San-Pedro, which was armed with a large number of plate mortars to bombard Cadiz. These mortars, being more than four thousand meters away from the city, could not get their bombs there. Ten-inch howitzers, called à la Villantroys, were then sunk in Seville, which, pointed at forty-five degrees, carried their bombs up to five thousand meters, in the very center of the city. But, to obtain this maximum range, it was necessary, although the bombs weighed ninety pounds, to fill them halfway with lead, and then they no longer contained enough powder to explode. They had very little effect, and the inhabitants hardly noticed the bombardment.

Several batteries were also established against the harbor, between the Rio San-Pedro and Puerto Sainte-Marie; others were established at Puerto Real to beat the arsenal of Caracas that the enemy had fortified and armed with one hundred and fifty guns, supporting his left in the island of Léon. A large number of entrenchments and redoubts were built along the Sancti-Petri, to contain the sorties of the enemy, and to cover Chiclana. More than two hundred and sixty large-caliber guns were thus placed in battery on the whole line; but it was very difficult to feed such a large number of guns. Independently of these works, bridges were built, roads were opened with branches, to communicate with all the posts. The mills that the enemy had destroyed were rebuilt. Stores were created in Jerez, a hospital for twelve hundred sick people, and a large handling of provisions. All the carpenters and sailors of the country were requisitioned, and built in the Rio Souraque, a tributary of the Sancti-Petri, between Chiclana and Puerto Real, a flotilla of barges and gunboats and a large bridge of boats, to force the passage of the Sancti-Petri.

Later, the ship captain Saizieux, sent from France with sailors and workers, had another flotilla of one hundred and fifty gunboats built on the coast of Sanlúcar, which was taken to the mouth of the Rio San-Pedro, to the right of the Trocadero Peninsula. There, each vessel was hoisted onto a wooden floor a thousand metres long and taken by hand across the peninsula into the Trocadero canal covered by the Saint-Louis Island in the inner harbor. This flotilla was to serve as a diversion behind the enemy on the island of Leon, at the time of the main attack on this island from the Sancti-Petri side.

Marshal Soult supported the work of the blockade of Cadiz from Seville and was busy organizing his means of defense in Andalusia. Having no help to expect from France, he had to create resources of all kinds and provide for the needs of his army⁶. He had the country's niter mines and sulfur mines put into operation. The lead mines of Linares and the copper that flowed from the waters of the Rio Tinto provided him with metal to make bullets and cast guns. He had four powder mills, and two blast furnaces built. Wanting to use at the same time the resources he could get from trade, he had several buildings armed to protect coastal shipping. The immense Carthusian convent, called La Cartuja, located in Seville on the right bank of the Guadalquivir, was surrounded by a bastioned enclosure, armed with artillery, and became an excellent citadel to serve as a stronghold for the garrison and administrations in the event of an attack. Barracks, hospitals and stores were established there. The Triana suburb, located on the same bank, was

⁶ See supporting documents, no. 49,183

also fortified to serve as a bridgehead. The fort of La Niebla, which supported the line of the Rio Tinto, was put in a state of defense, as well as the fort of Huelva, located further forward at the mouth of the Odiel. The forts of Granada, Malaga, Alcala la Real, Jaen were built, which later served as a refuge for the Fourth Corps, when it was blockaded by the Spanish army of Murcia. The posts of Antequera, Ronda, Zahara, Olvera and Moron, were entrenched to suppress the insurrections that the enemy, master of Gibraltar and Tarifa, fomented in the mountains of Ronda. The buildings of the Inquisition in Cordoba, that of the government in Andújar, became real citadels to ensure communications on the main road to Madrid. Considerable work was also undertaken to ensure the navigation of the Guadalquivir from Cordoba, in order to facilitate the transport of equipment and supplies.

Marshal Mortier continued to guard, with the Fifth Corps, the passes of the Sierra-Morena, on the side of Estremadura. The Marquis de la Romana, two of whose divisions had been defeated on 5 July at Jerez de los Caballeros, taking advantage of the departure of the Second Corps, left Badajoz on 5 August, and advanced with ten thousand men on Seville by the main road; but he was beaten, on the 11th, at Bienvenida by the First Division of the Fifth Corps, commanded by General Girard, and obliged to withdraw to Almendralejo. General Copons, posted on the lower Guadiana with three thousand Spaniards, and General Lacy, disembarked at Moguer with five thousand men, having made their junction, advanced towards Sanlúcar to support the movement of the Marquis de la Romana. Their troops were beaten and dispersed by a column detached from Seville, under the orders of General Pepin.

In the month of September, the Marquis de la Romana, having reinforced himself with some Portuguese troops, set out again on the campaign with twelve thousand men, and headed by the main road from Seville to Santa-olalla. Marshal Mortier went to meet him with the Fifth Corps, and defeated him, on 13 September, at Fuente de Cantos. La Romana then left Estremadura with eight thousand men, heading for Lisbon, where he joined Lord Wellington's army. He left Mendizabál and Ballesteros with twelve thousand men on the Guadiana, to observe the Fifth Corps and cover the places on the frontier. Informed of this movement, the Emperor immediately gave the order to Marshal Soult to detach the Fifth Corps in pursuit of La Romana, to create a diversion in favor of Masséna⁷.

General Sebastiani, commander of the Fourth Corps, had to repel both the efforts of the army of Murcia, ten thousand strong, under the command of General Freire, and to suppress the insurrections fomented by the English in the mountains of Ronda. In the month of June, four thousand Spaniards landed at Algeciras and advanced on Ronda; but General Sebastiani, by a combined movement with Marshal Victor, who sent him a column, forced them to re-embark at Marbella. In the month of August, Blake left Cadiz with four thousand men and came to reinforce General Freire's army in Murcia. General Sebastiani immediately advanced against him with seven thousand men; but finding him entrenched in a good position in front of Murcia, he did not believe himself strong enough to attack him, and returned to Granada, which the bands were already threatening.

On 14 October, the English attempted an expedition to seize Malaga, whose harbor was covered with French privateers and richly laden ships. For this purpose, they landed four thousand men

⁷ See supporting documents, No. 50.

in sight of the fort of Fuengirola, situated four leagues west of Málaga. General Sebastiani ran to meet them, overwhelmed them, forced them to re-embark, and took three hundred prisoners, among whom was Lord Blayney, commander of the expedition. On 2 November, Blake went to Cúllar with the Army of Murcia, and advanced with seven thousand men as far as Baza. General Milhaud, who was at this point with a division of dragoons and a brigade of infantry, attacked the enemy, causing them to lose two thousand men and forcing them to withdraw. General Sebastiani, who had rushed with reinforcements, did not arrive until after the action. Blake, always unhappy in pitched battle, left General Freire in command of the Army of Murcia and returned to Cadiz.

Marbella, a small town of four thousand souls, situated at the end of a fairly beautiful harbor, between Gibraltar and Málaga, offered the Spanish and the English a very useful landing point, protected by a fort armed with ten guns, and defended by two hundred and forty men. As early as July, General Sebastiani, wishing to seize this important point, from which one could monitor everything that entered and left Gibraltar, had undertaken, from Fuengirola, a path of six leagues of development through the mountains, to lead artillery without passing under the fire of an English frigate and two brigs, anchored in the harbor.

These works, abandoned soon after due to the movements of the Army of Murcia and the landing of the English at Fuengirola, were resumed in the month of November with six hundred men, protected by a battalion. General Sebastiani, after having destroyed a body of insurgents in the mountains of Ronda, went on December 1st to Málaga, from where he headed the next day for Marbella with two thousand four hundred men of infantry, two regiments of cavalry, two companies of artillery and a company of sappers. On the 3rd, the city of Marbella was occupied, in spite of the fire of the squadron and the fort. A small siege crew was brought from Fuengirola, by the new road; the trench was opened in front of the fort, and two batteries were raised, which, armed with nine pieces of gunfire, began to fire on the morning of the 8th. After a lively cannonade, the English squadron put to sea; but during the night it approached the coast, to collect the garrison who evacuated the fort and embarked.

General Sebastiani had the fort of Marbella put back into a defensive state. He had the Capuchin convent in the city fortified to serve as a redoubt. He sent a detachment to dismantle the fort of Estepona, which, located five leagues further, had been evacuated by the enemy. After having had some posts entrenched on the new road, to ensure communications with Fuengirola and Málaga, he returned to Granada to prepare for the siege of Cartagena, an important city, support of the Spanish Army of Murcia, and a point of rest for the English fleet, intermediary between Cadiz and Valencia.

In the interior of Spain, the bands of guerrillas had increased greatly since part of the French troops had entered Portugal. Reinforced by the remains of the defeated armies, they devastated the country. In Biscay and Navarre, several of these bands, pursued by the columns of the Imperial Guard, had taken refuge in the mountains of Soria. That of Amor, with two thousand four hundred infantry and four hundred cavalry, was attacked on 6 September near Soria by General Roguet, who killed six hundred of his men. The bands of Porlier also suffered serious setbacks on the Potes side, as did those of Longa in Biscay and Mina in Navarre, which were partly dispersed. Porlier, having managed to reform his bands, advanced on 15 September to

Oviedo with three thousand men. He was defeated by General Bonet, who killed four hundred of his men, took one hundred prisoners and destroyed his cavalry. This attack by Porlier was combined with that which the English and the Spanish made on Gijon, two days later, with five frigates, two brigs and several transports. They landed three thousand men, seized some ships that were in the port; but, learning of the failure of Porlier, they re-embarked and headed for Santoña, where they presented themselves on 23 October, and made a landing on the coast. The arrival of some troops of General Caffarelli and a violent storm, which caused them to lose several transports, forced them to withdraw.

On the borders of Aragon and Lower Catalonia, General Suchet, pursuing his successes, was preparing for the siege of Tortosa. The presence of the Spanish army of Bassecourt at Valencia, and that of O'Donnell at Tarragona, only allowing him to advance on this place by the banks of the Ebro, he had a road opened nearly twenty leagues long on the right bank of this river, and from 2 July, he blockaded the bridgehead of Tortosa. A corps was detached on the Cenia to observe the army of Valencia. The French troops remained nearly six months in these advanced positions, being able to bring in only successively the material gathered at Mequinenza, and awaiting the seventh corps which was to cover the siege on the side of Tarragona. During all this time, they were exposed to the attacks of the two Spanish armies which they separated, and to the sorties of the garrison of Tortosa; nevertheless, they managed to repel the attempts of the enemy and retained their positions.

Marshal Macdonald, who had replaced Marshal Augereau after his retreat to Girona, had received orders to advance again with the Seventh Corps towards the frontiers of Aragon, to cover the siege of Tortosa. He began by bringing a considerable convoy of provisions into Barcelona, and went, on 13 June, to Reus. Then crossing the defiles of Montblanc, he joined, on 20 August, General Suchet at Lerida. The shortage of provisions was a continual obstacle to the operations of the Seventh Corps. He found resources at Lerida; but, in order not to exhaust them, Marshal Macdonald extended his camps to Tarrega and Cervera. He remained nearly two months in these positions, waiting for General Suchet to have completed the transport of his artillery to begin the siege of Tortosa.

O'Donnell did not remain an idle spectator of this situation. Seeing Marshal Macdonald established near Lerida, he judged that the moment was favorable to attempt a coup de main towards Upper Catalonia, which remained almost stripped of troops. He left his fortified camp at Tarragona on 6 September, advanced by forced marches along the sea, cleverly containing, by simulated demonstrations, the garrisons of Barcelona and Hostalrich, and fell unexpectedly, on the 14th, on the brigade of General Schwartz, quartered at La Bisbal, three-quarters of a league from Girona. He was supported by an Anglo-Spanish squadron, which attacked at the same time Palamós and San-Feliu de Guíxols. The French, surprised by tenfold forces, put up the most spirited resistance: but, obliged to yield to numbers, they withdrew to an old castle where they finally capitulated. Fifteen hundred men laid down their arms. These prisoners were embarked and taken to Tarragona, where O'Donnell, seriously wounded, returned in triumph in the midst of a population drunk with joy. For this feat of arms, the supreme junta awarded him the glorious title of Count of La Bisbal.

This success electrified the Catalans; the audacity and ferocity of the peasants knew no bounds. They mercilessly massacred all the detachments they surprised on the roads. However, a considerable convoy for Barcelona was prepared at Girona: fearing that it would be taken on the way, Marshal Macdonald postponed the cooperation he was to take in the siege of Tortosa, and returned on 10 November to Girona, from where he set out again on the 22nd for Barcelona, escorting the convoy that he introduced there on the 25th. He left this city in the first days of December to go to the Ebro and arrived at Mora on 13 December with fifteen thousand men. General Suchet, who had completed his preparations, immediately began the operations of the siege of Tortosa. (*See the account of this siege, Volume III.*)

*Details on the part of the frontier of Portugal between the Douro and the Tagus,
extracted from the work of General Foy.*

One would hardly appreciate the difficulty of invading Portugal, by the appearance that the configuration of this country presents on geographical maps. One would say that once established in Spain, there is only one step to take to cut through the middle this strip of land parallel to the sea, one hundred and thirty leagues long, and at most fifty wide. The operation seems all the simpler since the two largest rivers of the country, the Douro and the Tagus, have already provided Spain with the greater part of their course; and that, according to what physical geography teaches, the mountains lower and the valleys widen as the rivers approach their mouths. It is quite the opposite here, and that is why Portugal has remained a kingdom independent of Spain. The provinces of Entre-Douro and Minho and Trás-os-Montes, south of the lower Douro, are more mountainous and more difficult than the Spanish provinces bordering on Galicia, and especially on Leon and Zamora. Between the Douro and the Tagus, the plains of Salamanca and the valley of Plasencia end with Spain. The Sierra de Gata which separates them, lowers as it passes the border of Galicia, and rises suddenly four leagues from there to form the Estrela. The mass and branches of the Estrela cover the region of central Portugal called the Beira. The principal summit of this vast mountain is three leagues to the southwest of Guarda. It rises eight hundred fathoms above sea level. The snow is preserved there all the year. From its granite slopes issue the Zêzere, the Mondego, the Alva, and thirty other tributaries of the Tagus and the Douro. Its buttresses are shaped, sometimes in sharp edges, sometimes in terraces of blocks of sandstone agglomerated without order. Nature and reason of state have conspired together to prevent the tracing of communication routes between Portugal and Spain through the rocks of the Beira. The great road from Bayonne to Lisbon, the one that carriages usually follow, passes through Madrid, crosses the Tagus at the Almaraz bridge in Spanish Extremadura, enters Portugal by the Alentejo, and crosses the river a second time in front of Lisbon, where it is three leagues wide.....

It was therefore inevitable to run into the Estrela. On this side, two roads lead to Lisbon. One is to the north, the other to the south of the crest of the mountain. The first passes through Almeida, Celorico, Ponte-Murcela and Thomar. The narrow carts of the country which are harnessed with oxen roll there with ease⁸. There are no considerable obstacles to the advance of artillery, except on the descent of the schistose plateau of the Beira-Alta, in the valley of the Mondego. The torrents to be forded are few in number. There are bridges over the principal rivers, such as the Mondego, the Alva, and the Ceira. The country is populated and abundant. The second road goes through Castelo Branco and Abrantès. It crosses, for the space of thirty leagues, a mass of rocks, a desert where industry has fertilized here and there some corners of an ungrateful land. The steep foothills of the Sierra da Estrela present themselves perpendicular to the direction of the march. Every two leagues, one encounters rivers which have neither bridges nor boats, and which, during the winter or after the rains, one cannot cross without imminent danger. In such a highly uneven terrain, the most inert defense can disconcert the most seasoned army. When, after having triumphed over men and nature, this army arrives at Abrantès, and

⁸ One will find in the *Voyage en Portugal*, by MM. Professors Link and Count Hoffmannsey, the most faithful picture that has been drawn of the men and things of this country.

reaches, so to speak, the end of its labors, the Tagus and the Zêzere separate it from the promised land, and present an impenetrable barrier to those who have been unable to bring with them either artillery or bridge crews.....

Alcântara, situated on the left bank of the Tagus, is famous for its bridge, a magnificent work of the Romans.... From Zarza-la-Mayor, the road to Portugal passes through Segura, a Portuguese village on the Erjas, and heads towards Castelo Branco. From there it crosses at the Portela da Milharia the steep mountains which run perpendicular to the Tagus, from the summit of Moradal to behind Villa-Velha, and which, after having narrowed the river between two rocks, extend towards Nisa in the Alentejo. A river, the Ocreza, crosses, or rather tears apart this arduous chain. The Ocreza is never fordable near its mouth in the Tagus... It is also necessary to cross the Alvito, wider and almost as deep; the Troya, the passage of which is very dangerous. On the right bank of the Alvito rises steeply the chain which comes from Moradal. The pass by which the road crosses it is called Portela das Seladas. There are traces of ancient redoubts.... From Sobreira-Formosa to Abrantès there are other mountains and other torrents.... It is necessary to descend almost vertically into the bed of the Codes and then climb the wall of rocks on the left bank of this tributary of the Zêzere.

For five deadly days, sad mounds of sandstone succeed moors of sharp schistose rocks and are replaced by enormous mountains of granite. Where the stone does not show itself in the open, the eye is lost in moors uniformly dotted with heather and cistus. Lean goats, quick to flee into the mountains, make up the only herds of the inhabitants. To find human traces, it is necessary to look for them at the bottom of some ravines which retain water during the summer. There, near the hamlet which, by the color and shape of its houses, resembles a continuation of the eternal rock, some enclosed areas have been planted with olive trees, and a little rye and corn have been sown. Nothing interrupts the monotony of the landscape except isolated chestnut trees, pale cork trees, and stunted holm oaks, the sight of which is saddening in all seasons....

Abrantès is a considerable city. It is built on the southern side of an eminence, at the foot of which flows the Tagus. It is reached by narrow and difficult paths; the upper part has old walls and a ruined castle. There is a permanent pontoon bridge a quarter of a league below the city walls. It is the last one going towards Lisbon. Soon the Tagus, swollen by the Zêzere, ceases to roll in chasms, and descends to the sea, majestic, immense, and watering fertile countryside, situated in the desert part and at the entrance to Alentejo on the one hand, and to Extremadura on the other.

No. 45.

*Letter from Lord Wellington to the Portuguese
Minister Don Miguel Forjas.*

Gouveia, 6 September 1810.

Excellency, I have received your letter of the 1st of this month, which informs me that you have placed before the eyes of the government of this Kingdom my dispatch of 27 August, announcing the distressing and unexpected news of the loss of Almeida; that the government has learned with sorrow that an unforeseen accident had prevented me from relieving this place, but that it hopes that the dejection into which such an event has plunged the people will soon dissipate by the great and prompt successes which it expects with certainty from the efforts of the army. I have already informed the government of the Kingdom that I did not expect the fall of Almeida; that I deplored the loss of it and of my hopes and considered it as likely to equally distress and discourage the people of the Kingdom. It was not, however, my intention to state in this letter, whether I would have been willing to succor that place or not; and I now beg the permission of the government of this Kingdom to say, that although I ardently desire to see the impression which this event has justly produced upon the public dissipated, I do not propose to alter in any way the plan of operations which, after the most mature deliberation, has been adopted as most likely to favor the cause of the allies, and consequently Portugal. I beg the government to believe that I am not insensible to the value of their confidence, as well as that of the public, and also that I am greatly interested in dispelling the public anxiety; but I should be neglecting my duties to my sovereign, to the prince regent, and to the general cause, if I allowed vain clamor or fear to make me modify, in the slightest way, the system and plan of operations which I have adopted after serious reflection, and which daily experience demonstrates to be the only ones which can lead to a happy end.

Signed: WELLINGTON.

No. 46.

*Report of the Intendant General Lambert to Prince Berthier,
Major General, on the situation of the Army of
Portugal.*

Viseu, 23 September 1810.

Monseigneur,

The Army of Portugal made its move on the 15th of this month through the defiles of Guarda, Celorico and Pinhel, always considered impassable for vehicles. The last of these communications, indicated as the only one where it was possible to risk artillery and food vehicles, was found to be the longest and the worst.

The headquarters slept on the 16th at Freixedas, on the 17th at Celorico, on the 18th at Mangualde, on the 19th at Viseu, where it is still awaiting the arrival of the artillery of the great park and the reserve.

The points occupied today by the army between Viseu and Coimbra are Santa-Comba-Dão and Pont de Criz by the Second Corps; Sabugosa, Tondela and Casal de Maria by the Sixth Corps; Viseu and its radius by the Eighth Corps; the cavalry reserve, the large park and all the carriages are two leagues behind, but out of danger, after having caused real worries and delayed the operations.

The roads could not be more deteriorated or more obstructed. The bridges of the Côa, the Mondego and their tributaries were intact; which is of great importance in a country where the rivers are deeply entrenched, and where the smallest stream becomes a formidable torrent at the first storm.

Towns, villages, hamlets, everything was deserted, to the point that the prince never had a single guide. Everywhere, the inhabitants had fled to places of difficult access, driving their livestock before them and taking from their houses what could be of some use to us. However, the extreme fertility of the country, the abundance of wines, that of fruits and vegetable plants, offered much ease of existence to the soldier, who moreover had biscuits and rice in his bag, and his parks of oxen following him.

The Beira produces little wheat; but its valleys are covered with corn; its hillsides, with vines; its woods, planted with olive trees, chestnut trees and a species of oak whose acorn offers a pleasant food. All these productions will be used when their maturity has allowed them to be collected.

Viseu was without inhabitants like all the places we had passed. We looked in vain for stores there; everything had been evacuated by the enemy army. The houses of individuals were however supplied, which turned to the advantage of the soldiers, without it being possible to make a regular distribution, the necessity of forcing the doors to find lodging, having exposed most of the houses to inevitable damage.

The hospital of Viseu had three hundred supplies in good condition; but the Prince not having considered this city as situated in his future line of communications, I had to give up the idea of establishing there the small number of sick that the corps have in their wake.

It is now, Monseigneur, that I appreciate the extreme usefulness of the brigades of mules, which, without any loss, followed our movements exactly, while the equipments, which delayed them, arrive in a deplorable state.

Fourteen caissons of the First Provisional Battalion and five caissons of the Tenth were dilapidated and burned; the First Battalion lost fifteen horses, and the Tenth, four mules. Twenty-nine thousand rations of biscuit contained in these caissons, and in some others that had to be lightened, were distributed to different regiments that followed this route, and could not reach the sixth corps, to which they belonged.

I have acquired the experience that four pack mules, carrying eight hundredweight, march as fast as the columns; while a caisson loaded with eight hundred, cannot cross any of the obstacles of the mountains. I also wish to organize our relay teams in this way, because it would be disadvantageous to the government to have new caissons built in Lisbon, even if a means of doing so economically were found there.

I must wish that the two new brigades formed in Bayonne, unfortunately three months after the request I had made, can reach the general headquarters, and that six other brigades can be formed there in all haste, this type of transport being the only one suitable for the roads of this country.

Such, Monseigneur, is the situation of the army, which will soon resume its movement towards Coimbra.

Signed: LAMBERT.

No. 47.

*Report of the Intendant General Lambert to Prince Berthier, Major General,
on the situation of the Army of Portugal.*

Alenquer, 20 October 1810.

Monseigneur,

The campaign of the Army of Portugal; the singularity that it presents, in crossing a kingdom without seeing a single inhabitant; the difficult marches that it had to make in a country interspersed with mountains, and deprived of guides who compensate for the imperfection of the maps; the total exhaustion of its means of clothing, equipment and transport; the enormous sums that are owed to it, and the absolute emptiness of the army's treasury; the impossibility of resorting to the way of contributions in absolutely deserted cities; the insufficiency of the resources that the contributions would offer, even in the most favorable chances for the expedition; everything makes it my duty to call in the most serious manner, the attention and the solicitude of Your Highness on the Army of Portugal. In the report that I had the honor to address him on August 27th last, I had brought to 5,396,000 francs what was due to the army until September 1st last. This sum was composed, both of what was due on the pay, and of other expenses of money detailed in my report. Since that time, the payments made have on the one hand diminished the debt, but on the other it has increased by two months of pay, which will be due at the end of this month, and by various other expenses, so that they can be brought to approximately 7,000,000 francs. When the army occupied Spain, it was still possible to find in the extraordinary contributions, struck by the Dukes of Abrantès and Elchingen, resources which, although mediocre and painfully wrested, satisfied part of its needs; but our entry into Portugal closes us, at least for the moment, the way to these resources; and, even if communications were re-established, Your Majesty must feel that the funds coming from these contributions will be reserved by the governors of the provinces for the troops quartered in their district, rather than for an army placed at such a great distance, and whose very remoteness will not allow a good judgment of its needs.

Before leaving Spain, I charged the Ordonnatuer Clapiers with all the details relating to the collection of these contributions, which the intention of His Majesty the Prince of Essling is to maintain for the pay of the army; but, for more than a month, deprived of communications with Spain, I cannot know the result of his efforts and the amount of payments that have taken place. In the current situation of things, the army of Portugal finds itself reduced to its own means, in the heart of a deserted country, whose supplies have been devoured by the enemy troops. The army's cash reserve contains only 4,800 francs, namely: 4,000 francs in demand bonds on the public treasury, and 800 francs in cash. These are its only riches, which one would try in vain to increase by means of contributions, since the great expanse of country which we have traversed is empty of inhabitants, that one meets there only abandoned houses, and that one sees there only the traces of a fanaticism so violent, that the most encouraging proclamations, the most flattering promises have not been able to overcome the resistance of the unfortunate Portuguese and bring them back to their homes. I do not even fear to tell Your Highness: the most favorable chance for the expedition, that is to say the capture of Lisbon, would be insufficient for the payment of

our debts and current expenses; it would doubtless open to the army a wider field for supplies; it would allow us to draw them from the surrounding countries; by extending the circle of our communications, it would procure for us a temporary wealth, which one could even make quite durable with the help of a wise economy and a well-combined administration. But this chance, however advantageous it may really be, will enrich the army's coffers little. It must expect to see reproduced in Lisbon the image of what it saw on the road: it is more than probable that the rich inhabitants of the capital have already retired with their most precious possessions, and that on entering the city, we will find there, as in those we have passed through, only unfurnished palaces and all the signs of abandonment. Now, on what portion of the inhabitants could the contributions be levied? The middle class seems to me to be the one who will bear the burden most easily; but, besides the fact that policy requires a very great moderation in the imposition of contributions, the income from Lisbon will never be able, however high they may be supposed to be, to put the army in a position to do without government assistance. The tight line which it will occupy, to protect itself from all surprise and all attack, will not allow it to extend the system of contributions very far; it will be limited, by the nature of things, and the circumstances, to the exploitation of the resources which are at hand, while waiting for the help which it could receive to facilitate the means of extending its conquests and of increasing in proportion the mass of its resources of all kinds.

It is useless to add that the presence of three armies in a country not very rich in itself must have impoverished it further, and that the considerable expenses that must have been incurred in arming and equipping the national militias have required, on the part of the inhabitants, pecuniary sacrifices that must not turn to our advantage.

It results from this overview, Monseigneur, that the Army of Portugal, assuming all the successes that it must expect from the experience of the leader who commands it and from the valor that characterizes the Imperial troops, must receive the most prompt aid from the government, and that to delay sending it is to expose the corps to complaints that it is more useful to prevent than easy to suppress. Your Highness will judge that it is appropriate to direct these funds from Spain, and to draw them from the special coffers established in the six governments. The Army of Portugal has all the more rights to these funds, since in leaving Spain, it has deprived itself of the recovery, at least until this moment, of the four million which belong to it and which are allocated to the payment of pay, on the remainder of the extraordinary contributions struck by the Dukes of Abrantès and Elchingen. Your Highness would be good, after having determined the sum which it must send, and which I do not believe should be less than seven million, assuming that new troops do not come to add to the debt, to recommend to the governors of the provinces to have their arrival at the general headquarters protected. The situation of the army's cash reserve no longer allows for delay. The pay, the campaign bonuses, the compensation for lost horses, the postage, the immediate work of the artillery and engineers, the administrative expenses, the very important service of the hospitals, the deterioration of almost all our means in a difficult campaign carried out in the middle of the rains and by almost impassable roads, all imperiously demand the funds that I ask of Your Highness, and that I ask of him in the most pressing manner, because the difficulties of our position make it my duty.

For my part, Monseigneur, I have done all I could to ensure the army's supplies during its march, to make it live in a country that is not very rich, not very abundant by its nature, to finally justify

the confidence with which His Majesty the Emperor has been kind enough to honor me. I even have the sweet satisfaction of learning from Your Majesty that the supplies have not yet been used up, and that the army, despite the proximity of the English and Portuguese troops, and the ravages they have wrought, will not experience any more privations for some time; but I isolate from this report everything that is personal to me, to attach Your Majesty's ideas only to the need to send us funds and to prevent new complaints.

I beg you, Monseigneur, to accept the homage of my profound respect and my boundless devotion.

Signed: LAMBERT.

No. 48.

Letter from Marshal Masséna, Prince of Essling, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Portugal, to Prince Berthier, Major General.

Alenquer, 29 October 1810.

Monseigneur,

I am sending General Foy to Paris to give you an account of the position of the army.

For twelve days I have been in front of the works of the Anglo-Portuguese army: it is behind three lines of entrenchments on which it has been working for eighteen months. The attached sketch will show you its positions and ours.

I did not believe it necessary to attack entrenchments equipped with formidable artillery and an enemy twice as numerous as us: that would have been giving him too many advantages, and I would have compromised the army of His Majesty the Emperor. I would not have hesitated to give battle in the open country; but in the present state of things, I limit myself to observing him on all his debouchments, and, in the event that he wanted to give it to me himself, I would fall back on a line that I have recognized as being the most advantageous to us on the hills of Aveiras, a line having its left at Villanova, and its right at Minho de Cubo, in the direction of Alcoentre, and covering the two great roads of Leiria and Thomar.

I have made my principal establishments at Santarem; a large hospital has been formed there. I have had ovens built there, reestablished the mills, gathered all the grains that are quite abundant and collected all the materials that the country can offer to throw a pontoon bridge there, and, failing that, a raft bridge; but the enemy has so destroyed all the means whatsoever, that I do not know if I will be able to succeed in having it built. We have none of the tools that would be needed for this purpose; I am obliged to have some made. I have gathered all the workers of the army to work on it. Generals Eblé and Lazowski preside over all the works with the greatest activity; but however great our efforts may be, I hope and I dare not assure anything.

The army still finds enough food in the positions it occupies: all the mills in the country work for it; it cannot be said up to now that the army has experienced any needs. The fine weather has succeeded ten days of abundant and continuous rain. The Portuguese officers that I have with me assure us that it will be able to continue well throughout November.

The army, since our departure from Almeida, has a deficit of seven to eight thousand men, both wounded, dead and prisoners, as well as lost, whose fate is unknown; the sick who cannot do service are also included in this deficit, which, for this reason, is also considerable. Attached is the state of the situation.

We have not found a single inhabitant in the whole country that the army has traveled; and this will be hard to believe, not even in the large cities, like Coimbra, with a population ordinarily of twenty thousand souls. Since I have been in front of Lisbon, I have not been able to send a single man there. The less well-off class of the people have taken refuge in the woods; the rich have followed the English army to Lisbon. It is absolutely nothing but a desert, where the Portuguese officers that I have with me have been of no use to the army.

The rains have considerably damaged our cartridges; we did not have much of it when we left Almeida, as I had the honor of reporting to Your Highness, so that I am obliged to make the greatest economy of it, and to repress only with the greatest circumspection the insolence of the English posts.

I am holding my positions, in the hope that the Portuguese refugees in Lisbon will perhaps make a movement against the English, who have reduced them to the most terrible misery, or else that Lord Wellington will leave his entrenchments to come and receive or give me battle. If my efforts for the establishment of a bridge over the Tagus are a happy success, I will then be able to maneuver on both banks, and live with the resources of the Alentejo, a country abundant in wheat, and the richest in Portugal. I can also, in the position in which I find myself, await the reserve that His Majesty will not have failed to send me, according to what is said in Your Highness' instructions. I must, however, inform him that I am leaving today to visit the whole course of the Tagus as far as Santarem, and even as far as the confluence of the Zêzere. If the establishment of a pontoon bridge of boats or rafts were absolutely impracticable, and it were impossible for me to cross the river, I would decide to make a retrograde movement before the heavy rains; but it would only be after having convinced myself that there would be no other course to take. I would head by the road of Ponte de Murcela and Guarda, so as not to follow the path I have already taken, and to find some resources.

My position is difficult; but I repeat, to attack three lines of entrenchments, and an enemy who has twice as many forces as I have, and, behind him, all the means necessary to re-embark, did not seem to me suitable for the good of His Majesty's service. I have therefore decided to put myself on the defensive, while awaiting His Majesty's orders, and the result of the arrangements I am making.

Moreover, General Foy will give His Majesty and Your Highness all the details you may desire. They will convince you that in short we need here a reinforcement of troops, munitions, shoes and money.

I have sought all possible means to give my news to Your Highness, I do not know if they will have reached you. I have sent you some from Viseu, from Coimbra, by a Portuguese officer (M. Mascarillas), from Leiria, and from Alenquer. I have finally decided to send General Foy, with a detachment.

I am with respectful devotion, etc.

Signed: MASSENA.

No. 49.

Report of Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the South, to Prince Berthier, Major General.

Seville, 4 August 1810.

By a decision of the Emperor, of the month of February last, His Majesty decided that from the 1st of January, all expenses of general administration of the engineers and artillery would be the account of the Spanish government. As soon as I was informed of this, I requested His Majesty to assign a sum for this purpose; but I could only obtain 2,000,000 reals (533,000 francs), and even then the King intended that the payments should only go back to the month of February. This sum was far insufficient. I have never ceased to show this situation, as has the Intendant General; our requests were not accepted, and, to cover as much as possible the difference, I had to resort to extraordinary receipts made without the participation of the Spanish ministers. I hope that this method will succeed, it has already produced some sums. The statement that I attach here makes known the recoveries that were made on the funds of 533,000 francs of the monthly credit, at the time of 1 August, which form the sum of 3,731,000 francs. But independently, there were extraordinary receipts for at least 500,000 francs, which received the same destination (general administration expenses). Before this time, I had made available to M. the Intendant General securities for more than a million, which were to be used to pay part of the army. M. the Intendant General justifies the use of all these sums in his general accounts. The ministers of His Catholic Majesty do not accept the accounts that I present; first of all, they do not want to allocate the sum of 500,000 francs, which has been carried over to the item of general administration expenses, relying on this subject on the decision of the King, who only brings these expenses back up to the month of February, although the Emperor expressly understood that the month of January should also be included; they also do not want to recognize the extraordinary receipts, or they claim to deduct the product from the monthly credit of 533,000 francs. It is not in my power to accept their motives, the decision of the Emperor is express, and, as long as I am in the delicate situation in which I find myself, my duty will oblige me to provide for the needs of the service by all practicable means. The receipts which are received in Andalusia have been used for all the expenses of the artillery, the engineers, the general staffs and the general administration, which are truly immense; and, although absolutely nothing has been received from France or Madrid, I have at the same time been able to have three months' pay paid to the army. This is doubtless very little, when eight to ten months' arrears are owed to

the troops, and the insufficiency of the means obliges to increase these arrears still further; but receiving nothing, I believe that it was impossible for me to do better. Your Majesty will be convinced of this herself, if she wishes to dwell for a moment on the overview which I am going to give her of the charges which Andalusia supports.

Nearly one hundred thousand rations of food and twenty thousand rations of fodder are consumed every day; there are two thousand sick in the hospitals. The fortress of Jaen, the fort of Malaga, that of the Alhambra of Granada, above which a large fortified camp has been built; all the castles on the seashore, from Cabo de Gata to Fuengirola, the castle of Alcala la Real, the square of Ronda, the old castles of Olvera and Moron, the castle of Belalcázar, the castle of las Guardias, and several other posts on the frontiers of Extremadura, which have also had to be occupied. The expenses incurred by the works in front of Cadiz and the construction of a flotilla have been provided for. A powder magazine and an arms factory have been established in Granada, which has so far yielded little, but which will subsequently be very useful. The foundry and arsenal of Seville have been re-established and put into great activity, where fifteen hundred workers are employed daily. We lacked powder, projectiles and gun carriages: I had two powder mills re-established in Seville, and all the niter mines of Andalusia exploited; now there are also projectiles of all calibers in Seville, up to twelve-inch bombs; all the old iron has been collected; the necessary gun carriages for the armament of the batteries in front of Cadiz have been built. Shoes and clothing have been requisitioned, which the troops have benefited from. I have raised two thousand mules in the country, which have been given to the artillery, military crews and engineers. I have had a crew of thirty-six mountain pieces built and organized, including twelve twelve-inch howitzers, which are carried on the backs of mules, and will be distributed to all the army corps. All of these expenses, as well as an infinite number of others which I do not enumerate, are the responsibility of the Spanish government, and the country supports them independently of the monthly credit of 533,000 francs, and of the extraordinary receipts which I operate when possible, the application of which takes place in favor of the general administration of the army, of the engineers, of the artillery, of the general staffs, of the expenses of races and of the secret expenses. These charges are immense, and the country would never have been able to support them if we had not succeeded in putting order and the greatest regularity in the expenses and consumptions; but it would be difficult to increase them, perhaps there would even be danger in trying to do so; it is to the point that, although we are at the harvest, we must already think of bringing wheat from the other provinces, the product of Andalusia being insufficient for the consumption of its inhabitants and that of the army. However, His Catholic Majesty and his ministers, who are perfectly informed of this situation, wanted to attract to Madrid the revenues of Andalusia: I say the revenues because their demands exceeded the receipts; orders were even sent accordingly to the royal commissioners of the prefectures, and I found myself obliged to openly oppose the effect of this measure, the execution of which would not only have compromised all the services of the army, but perhaps caused seditious movements. Besides, it was impossible to fulfill it; on this subject, I have the honor of placing before Your Majesty the extract of a letter that I had the honor of writing to the King on 13 July last, and a copy of the one that I addressed to the Marquis of Almenara, Minister of Finance, on the 30th of the same month, in response to one of his, in which he described to me the desperate state of the finances of His Catholic Majesty. I earnestly beg Your Majesty to be good enough to report the contents of these letters and the present report to His Majesty the Emperor.

I would have liked His Majesty to be better informed of all that has been done in Andalusia, and to be able to enter into more extensive details; but I have had to limit myself to dealing with the main points; the details are found in my correspondence and in the reports of the Intendant General on the administration. However, from what I have said, His Majesty will have an exact idea of the administrative and other operations that have taken place, as well as of the state of his troops and the difficulties of my situation: it is such today that I must beg with the most earnest insistence His Majesty, in the name of his service itself, to deign to take it into consideration. I have duties to fulfill, the full extent of which I know: I devote myself to them without reserve; but the responsibility is too great for me, in the position in which I find myself to be able to support it. Indeed, I have to combat claims and interests which are evidently in opposition to those of the army, and consequently to those of the Emperor; I am forced by my own duties to oppose the execution of the various orders which the King gives, and to often do the opposite. I have to constantly struggle against the self-esteem of military leaders, who can often differ in opinion with me, and naturally claim to make their ideas prevail. All these considerations make me regard the task imposed on me as beyond my strength and lead me to desire that His Majesty the Emperor deign to make known to me his intentions or provide for my replacement, and place at the head of his army, in the south of Spain, a leader more capable than I of directing its operations. I will only allow myself to observe on this subject, that the good of the service of the Emperor imperatively commands that all the troops which are in the south of Spain, from the Tagus to the two seas, follow the same system of operations, and are consequently commanded by a single chief, who must be in the mind of the Emperor, and have his instructions, so that, the case presenting itself where he would be opposed in any way, he can conduct himself accordingly, and achieve the goal which will be indicated to him; any other system will delay the progress of affairs, and will inevitably cause inconveniences which could otherwise be avoided.

I have the honor to be, etc.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.

No. 50.

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to Prince
Berthier, Major General.*

Seville, 1 December 1810.

...Your Highness did me the honor of writing to me on 26 October, *that the intention of His Majesty is that I should push on La Romana, if it is true, as the English gazettes say, that he marched on Portugal.* It appears positive that La Romana went to join the English army at Lisbon, and that he took with him a detachment of seven to eight thousand men, from the army he commanded in Extremadura; the corps he left is still composed of twelve to thirteen thousand men, including two thousand five hundred cavalry, under the orders of Mendizabál. This troop is in the presence of the Fifth Corps, beyond the Sierra-Morena on the side of Llerena, and every day there are outpost affairs with it. Since the affair of Fuente-Cantos, the Duke of Trévise had been in the position to approach Seville: the large number of sick that the regiments had, put them out of condition to hold the campaign; I had the honor of reporting it to Your Majesty. The crisis has however ceased, and the regiments are beginning to recover well; but the convalescences are very long. As soon as the Fifth Corps was fit, I sent the greater part of it back to the defiles of the Sierra-Morena, on the side of Extremadura; there remained in Seville only what was necessary to contain its hundred thousand inhabitants. 500

To fulfill the intentions of His Majesty the Emperor, I cannot advance further into Extremadura than by going to Badajoz and immediately laying siege to that place. This enterprise is a major one; but, by its nature, it seems to me bound to succeed: at least it would produce a happy diversion in favor of the Imperial army which is in Portugal. I am therefore resolved to undertake it, and I will direct the expedition myself. For the past fifteen days they have been busy, with great activity, in Seville, forming the siege equipment. In three weeks, it will be ready, and I will leave immediately. I will take the whole Fifth Corps, three thousand cavalry men, and all that I can withdraw from before Cadiz. We will take all the provisions that can be loaded; perhaps before they are consumed, it will be possible to procure something in the country. I make this observation so that your Majesty may be informed that there are no provinces in Spain more exhausted than Extremadura; the Spanish troops there only maintain themselves by making partial incursions of fifteen to twenty leagues, and by taking everything; we do not have the same facility.

I will make arrangements so that the service of the Emperor will not be in a position to suffer during my absence, and I will have the honor of reporting it to Your Majesty. In the meantime, I beg you to have the kindness to inform His Majesty that for the moment it is impossible for me to do more. In a few days, I will return to Cadiz. I hope that everything will be ready at the time I have indicated, and that I will be able to leave around the twenty-fifth of this month.

I do not doubt that this diversion will be favorable to the army of Portugal, whether the enemy makes a detachment on me, to force me to give up the siege, or whether he lets me take Badajoz; but the result would be much more certain, if the Army of the Center supported my movement with some troops, or if I could only dispose of the two regiments that I must send there (no

detachment or battalion has yet arrived from the Army of the Center). I have the honor of writing to His Catholic Majesty to make this proposal to him, and I warn him that I am obliged to keep the company of gunners which was to join the Dessolles Division. It would still be useful if the Ninth Army Corps, which must be on the side of Almeida, were to approach the Tagus, and communicate with me, when I am in front of Badajoz.

I do not think I am in a position to change this project, which will, I hope, fulfill the Emperor's views, unless events occur that I cannot foresee.

I have the honor of asking Your Majesty to be kind enough to accept, etc.

Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.