

Translated by Greg Gorsuch
Part 4

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 1807 AND 1808

II

The aim of the campaign was totally missed. Napoleon, irritated by this reverse, the first he had experienced, and by the appearance of the English on the continent, prepared himself for a great effort to support his brother, King Joseph.

Consequently, one hundred thousand men of veteran troops, including thirty thousand cavalry, drawn in large part from the First, Fifth and Sixth Corps of the Grand Army of Germany, were directed to the Pyrenees¹; twenty thousand Italians and Neapolitans, twenty thousand Poles, Dutch, Westphalians and Germans were put in motion; moreover, a senatus-consultum ordered the raising of one hundred and sixty thousand conscripts, of whom thirty thousand, incorporated into the cadres drawn from the interior, were directed to Bayonne. Napoleon having resolved to put himself at the head of this new army, obtained the promise of the Emperor of Russia, in an interview he had with him at Erfurt, that this monarch would maintain complete neutrality in the event that Austria should make a diversion in favor of Spain. Returning to Paris on 18 October, he left this capital on the 30th to put himself at the head of his troops.

However, the sort of truce which had taken place in the Peninsula, since the French had concentrated on the Ebro, had been taken advantage of by the Spaniards to increase their means of resistance. Each province had organized and equipped an army corps; and, in less than six weeks from the victory of Baylen, Spain had one hundred and eighty thousand men of troops under arms. But this kingdom was then without administration, without generals, without experienced officers, without arsenals and without stores. The national army was, strictly speaking, only a collection of bands, most of them poorly armed, almost without artillery and without cavalry. The leaders were incapable of acting together and in concert in the great operations, for which there existed, moreover, no other supreme direction than that of a central junta, formed of two members of each of the seventeen juntas of the provinces, and installed in

¹ See supporting documents, no. 19.

Madrid towards the end of September. Until the French troops had withdrawn to the Ebro, the English government, occupied with the expedition to Portugal, had only weakly assisted the Spanish insurgents; but immediately after the convention of Sintra, the English army, twenty thousand strong and commanded by Sir John Moore, received the order to march on Valladolid. At the same time another body of ten thousand men, under the command of Sir David Baird, and coming directly from the ports of Great Britain, was to join it after having landed at Corunna.

While awaiting the somewhat late arrival of this important assistance, the Spaniards received a reinforcement which they were far from expecting, and which further exalted their courage. The Marquis de la Romana, who was in Denmark with sixteen thousand Spanish veterans, informed by the English admiral, cruising in the Baltic, of the events which were happening in his country, conceived the project of going to join the defenders of his country. He deceives the vigilance of Bernadotte's army by rapid marches and arrives with nine thousand men of his troops at the ports of Hyberg and Langeland, where English ships were ready to receive them. These troops were landed at Santander on 30 September and remained there in reserve while awaiting the Marquis of La Romana, who had passed to England to urge the arrival of new aid.

At the end of October, the Spanish armies were distributed as follows:

The Army of Galicia, under the command of Blake, and composed of forty thousand men, including the reserve, which remained at Santander, formed a body entirely detached to the left, occupying Orduña and Bilbao.

The Army of Extremadura, twenty thousand strong, and under the command of the Count of Belvedere, was in Burgos, awaiting the English army with which it was to join.

The Army of Andalusia, thirty thousand strong, under the command of Castaños, came to take up position in the center on the Ebro towards Tudela, leaving its left three days' march from Blake.

The Army of Aragon, twenty thousand strong, under the command of D. José Palafox, was on the extreme right towards Jaca, in front of Saragossa.

Finally, the Army of Catalonia, twenty-five thousand strong, under the command of General Vives, was closing in on the French troops in the fortresses of Barcelona and Figueres.

These troops soon had on their hands, and perhaps without realizing it, eight army corps, each formed of twenty-five to thirty thousand men, and a reserve no less considerable, offering an effective of three hundred and thirty-two thousand men, of whom two hundred and forty-eight thousand were present under arms.

The Fourth Corps, under the command of Marshal Lefebvre, had entered Spain on 11 October, and had taken up post on the heights of Durango, to the right of Vitoria, to contain the Army of Galicia. Soon after, it was supported and covered on its left flank by the First Corps, under the command of Marshal Victor, which advanced from Vitoria to Orduña.

In the centre and on the road to Madrid, Marshal Soult, with the Second Corps, and Marshal Bessières, with five divisions of dragoons, forming part of the reserve, occupied Miranda and the important defile of Pancorbo, covering Vitoria where King Joseph was stationed with two thousand men of the Neapolitan Royal Guard, a division of reserve infantry and twelve thousand men of the Imperial Guard.

Marshal Ney commanded the Sixth Corps in the vicinity of Guardia, observing the bridge of Logroño that the enemy occupied on the Ebro.

Marshal Moncey, with the Third Corps, covered the left of the line on the right bank of the River Aragon, which flows into the Ebro below Milagro.

The Fifth Corps, under the command of Marshal Mortier, was still in Bayonne.

The Seventh Corps, under the command of General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, was at Perpignan, and was preparing to enter Catalonia to unblock Barcelona.

Finally, the Eighth Corps, under the command of General Junot, and formed of the troops of the old army of Portugal, landed at Rochefort, was on the march towards Bayonne.

The campaign opened at the moment when the first reinforcements entered Spain. King Joseph had orders from the Emperor to undertake nothing before his arrival and was on the defensive. Blake, taking this apparent inactivity for timidity, resolved to advance by Durango to the rear of Vitoria, imagining that he would thus take prisoner all the French corps echeloned in front of this city, the strength of which he estimated at only about fifteen thousand men. Palafox and Castaños were to make a similar movement on the right, penetrating by Navarre. Leaving two divisions under observation at Orduña, under the command of General Acevedo, Blake left Bilbao on the 24th of October and went to Zornosa. After remaining there for a few days, he set out from that city on the morning of the 31st to attack Durango, while the two divisions of General Acevedo advanced on the same point by Villaro. On the approach of the enemy, Marshal Lefebvre, impatient to fight, descended from the heights of Durango at the head of twenty-five thousand men, formed in three columns. A thick fog covered the slope of the mountains and filled the plain. Suddenly one of the French columns encountered the advance guard of the enemy a league and a half from Zornosa and engaged in combat. The Spanish army, heaped up in confused masses, was driven from all its positions. It fled in disorder to Bilbao, which it only crossed, and retreated to Valmaseda (Balmaseda), behind the Salcedon (Cadagua). Marshal Lefebvre pursued them as far as Güeñes, where he left an advance guard, and returned to Bilbao. If he had been less hasty in attacking this army, if he had allowed it to advance, Marshal Victor, who was at Orduña, would have gone to its rear and crushed it.

Blake was joined at Valmaseda on 4 November by the two divisions of General Acevedo, who from Villaro managed to escape, despite the efforts of the French troops posted at Güeñes and Orduña. Then, Blake, believing himself strong enough to resume the offensive, attacked with four divisions the vanguard of the Fourth Corps at Güeñes. After two hours of fighting, the Spaniards were repulsed in disorder; only night saved them from a complete rout. One of their divisions was cut off and thrown back on Santander. Blake withdrew on the 9th to Espinosa,

where, having been joined by the reserves of the Marquis de la Romana, he still found himself at the head of twenty-five thousand men. He took up a strong position in front of the ravine of the Trueba, hoping to have time to replenish his harassed troops, lacking everything. Master of the road from Santander to Burgos, he could still link up with the army of Extremadura, which, posted in front of Burgos, defended the main road to Madrid, and he had to supply his army the immense stores of Reynosa, which the English had formed, foreseeing the case where they would be obliged to carry out their retreat on Santander.

The Emperor had arrived on the evening of 8 November at Vitoria; wishing to prevent the junction of the Spanish armies of Galicia and Extremadura, he gave the order to Marshal Soult to attack the latter with the Second Corps, which he had supported by the reserve cavalry of Marshal Bessières. Marshal Soult advanced from Briviesca to Monasterio, which he left on the 10th at four o'clock in the morning to attack the Count of Belvedere. The enemy retreated to Gamonal, a league in front of Burgos, where he took up position, the left supported by a park surrounded by walls, and the right by a wood beyond which was a fairly large open space as far as the river Arlanzón. Thirty pieces of cannon protected his front, and seven or eight thousand armed peasants were ranged on the heights behind the regular troops. These numbered eleven thousand and fifty infantrymen and eleven hundred and fifty cavalry. It was at that time the best army in Spain: it was composed of the Walloon and Spanish guards, several other old regiments, and volunteers from rich families. Marshal Soult led General Lasalle's cavalry into the plain between the river and the wood where the right of the Spaniards rested; while Mouton's division, composed of veteran soldiers, advanced into the wood at a fast pace, followed by Bonet's division. The victory did not remain long indecisive. The Spaniards fled in disorder; the left wing, although it had not been attacked, followed the example of the right; and, victors and vanquished, all rushed into Burgos with extraordinary violence. At the same moment, Marshal Bessières galloped with the heavy cavalry, went to the bridge where the main road to Madrid crosses the Arlanzón, sabered the fugitives, and seized all the artillery that had escaped the vigorous attack of General Mouton. Never was a defeat so prompt or so complete. Two thousand five hundred Spaniards were killed; twenty pieces of cannon, thirty caissons, twelve flags, and nine hundred men were taken on the field of battle. All the stores formed at Burgos fell into our power. The Count of Belvedere retired to Aranda de Douro with the remains of his troops.

The Emperor immediately went to Burgos, followed by the Imperial Guard and two divisions of Marshal Ney. The rest of the Sixth Corps and the troops of the Third remained in their first position on the banks of the Ebro and the River Aragon, in order to contain the armies of Andalusia and Aragon which were maneuvering to enter Navarre. He detached General Milhaud to Palencia with two divisions of cavalry and twenty-four pieces of light artillery, to turn the left flank of the English army which he believed to be already united at Valladolid. Marshal Soult received the order to head for Reynosa to act on Blake's rear. Marshal Bessières, with three divisions of cavalry, and Marshal Ney with two divisions of infantry, went to Aranda de Douro to finish clearing the plain and open the march on Madrid.

Blake, however, still held on to Espinosa. On the 8th, Marshal Victor had advanced against him at Orduña by Amurrio and Valmaseda, while Marshal Lefebvre was heading for the same point by Güeñes. These two marshals, after meeting at Valmaseda, separated again at Nava on the 9th.

Marshal Victor followed in Blake's footsteps, and Marshal Lefebvre marched by Medina on Villarcajo, to cut off the enemy's retreat to Burgos. The heads of Marshal Victor's column reached the outposts of Blake's army on the 10th of November and seized a wood where that army was supporting its right. Taking advantage of this first success, Marshal Victor attacked the enemy on the morning of the 11th. Maison's division went against the left of the Spaniards, and intercepted their line of retreat on Santander, as well as that by Espinosa. Blake detached a column of grenadiers to stop Maison's division, and advanced in person with three regiments to take it in flank: it was too late; the Spaniards were overthrown and rushed in crowds towards the ravine of the Trueba which surrounded the rear of their position. They lost many men there; those who escaped fled in disarray in all directions. The enemy had nearly ten thousand men killed, wounded or prisoners. His artillery, baggage and ammunition fell into our hands. Blake reached Reynosa on the 12th and rallied there about nine thousand fugitives. He was preparing to take the road to Leon by Aguilar del Campo, where he had left part of his artillery under the guard of two thousand men. But, from the 10th of November, Marshal Soult, having left Burgos, advanced in that direction with the Second Corps to cut off his retreat; and Marshal Lefebvre marched with hasty steps on Reynosa with the Fourth Corps through the valley of Villarcajo. On the 13th, Blake was attacked by the vanguard of the Second Corps; he then fled with four or five thousand men through the valley of Cabuérniga, and took refuge in Arnedo, in the heart of the mountains of Asturias. The Marquis de la Romana joined him there and took command of all that remained of this unfortunate army, which he managed to bring back to Leon. The Fourth Corps, after a halt of a few days, went to the Carrion to support the cavalry of General Milhaud who was at Palencia, and to cover Burgos, which from then on became the supply depot of the French army. Marshal Soult went with the Second Corps to the mountains of Santander, where he again picked up a large number of fugitives from the army of Galicia. Marshal Victor replaced him in the centre and came to join the Emperor at Burgos.

Already the two Spanish armies of Extremadura and Galicia were destroyed; only the right corps remained, designated under the names of the armies of Andalusia and Aragon, and commanded by Castaños and Palafox. The first of these corps was very proud of the success it had obtained at Baylen; the second was full of enthusiasm, because of the resistance it had made at Saragossa.

The Emperor was waiting in Burgos for the result of the great movement of his right to act against these two armies. On 19 November, he detached Marshal Lannes from his staff to direct the operation. The latter gathered, on 21 November, at Lodosa, the troops of the Third Corps, under the orders of Marshal Moncey, abandoning the whole country between the Ebro and Pamplona. He crossed the river with this corps, reinforced by the division of General Lagrange of the Sixth, and the cavalry brigades Colbert and Digeon who had remained at Logroño; in all thirty thousand men. He advanced on Calahorra and Alfaro, while Marshal Ney, who commanded the Sixth Corps, and had left Aranda since the 19th, with the divisions Marchand and Dessolles and the cavalry brigade of General Beaumont, went up the Douro by Almazán and Soria, to cut off the enemy's retreat to Madrid. Palafox, with the army of Aragon and a division of the troops of Valencia and Murcia, had taken up position on the heights of Tudela. Castaños, with the army of Andalusia, had posted himself at Tarazona and Cascante, more than a league apart from Palafox. Instead of approaching them, on the 23rd, at the moment when Marshal Lannes presented himself, he made a great movement to the left, to move on the rear of the French army, hoping to surround it as he had done at Baylen. Marshal Lannes saw at a glance

that he would have time to beat the army of Aragon before this movement was completed. He rushed upon it, pierced its center with the division of Maurice Mathieu in close column; the cavalry, commanded by General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, passes through this gap, surrounds the right wing of the Aragonese, and completes their rout. Then, by a change of front, Marshal Lannes faces the army of Castaños and forces it to withdraw without fighting. The enemy lost in this battle four thousand men killed or drowned in the Ebro, seven flags, thirty pieces of harnessed cannon, their caissons, and three thousand prisoners. Our loss was forty-four men killed, and five hundred and thirteen wounded.

Marshal Lannes, after having pushed the army of Andalusia as far as Tarazona, abandoned the pursuit to the division of Maurice Mathieu of the Third Corps, and returned to Tudela on the 24th. There, still ill from a fall from his horse that he had suffered on entering Spain and believing moreover that the mission with which the Emperor had charged him was finished, he left command to Marshal Moncey. The latter advanced, on the 25th, as far as Alagon; but the lack of provisions prevented him from pushing further. Palafox withdrew, without being disturbed, to Saragossa with the remains of his army.

Marshal Ney had arrived on 22 November at Soria; but, having stopped two days in this city, he gave Castaños time to escape, and thus lost the fruit of the fine movement planned by the Emperor. Instead of pursuing Castaños, he marched directly on Saragossa. Marshal Moncey, urged by the Emperor, who had learned with displeasure of his stay at Alagon, followed Marshal Ney; and, on 30 November, in the afternoon, the French troops appeared under the walls of Saragossa. But, the very next day, Marshal Ney having received orders which reminded him that his mission was to pursue the army of Castaños, and to destroy it, he left, with all the troops of the Sixth Corps, for Calatayud, where the division Maurice Mathieu of the Third Corps had remained. Marshal Moncey, finding himself too weak to remain under the walls of Saragossa, returned to Alagon.

The Emperor had left Burgos on 22 November and had gone to Aranda de Douro with his Guard and the First Corps to reinforce Marshal Bessières, and to support, if necessary, Marshal Ney in his march on Soria. Very displeased with the false movement of this Marshal, and the retreat of the Third Corps on Alagon², he ordered the fifth corps, which had just entered Spain, to join the third to march on Saragossa. Soon after began the siege of this city, one of the most memorable of which history makes mention (*see the account of this siege, volume II*).

Castaños had withdrawn by the road of Guadalajara, trying to reach Madrid. Accused of treason for not having taken part in the battle of Tudela, he was arrested by order of the junta and handed over his command to General Lapeña. His troops, pursued by Marshal Ney and lacking everything, partly dispersed.

Meanwhile the Emperor had left Aranda on the 28th of November, with his Guard, the First Corps and the reserve, and was marching on Madrid. His advance guard arrived on the 30th at the foot of the Somosierra, which is crossed by the great road to Castile. General Juan had taken up position there with thirteen thousand elite troops. Sixteen pieces of artillery, ranged in the pass of the defile, swept the entire escarpment of the mountain, the steepness of which was

² See supporting documents, nos. 20 and 21.

extremely favorable to the defense. The infantry was advantageously placed on the right and left, in lines, and one above the other; some entrenchments closed the most open parts.

Three columns of infantry of two battalions each, attacked the position from the wings and from the center, but could make no progress. A thick fog mingled with the smoke of the artillery and prevented anything from being seen. The Emperor had the idea of taking advantage of this circumstance to have the Polish lancers of his Guard charge the Spanish batteries which were defending the main road. The first squadron was repulsed, but the entire regiment returned to the charge and seized the batteries. The Spanish army, struck with terror by this incredible stroke of audacity, fled, abandoning its arms, its ammunition, its baggage, and a large number of prisoners.

The Emperor continued his march; and on 2 December, the anniversary of the Battle of Austerlitz and the coronation, he presented himself before the capital of Spain. The Sixth Corps, under the command of Marshal Ney, covered the left towards Guadalajara. On the right, Marshal Soult, leaving Bonet's division in the province of Santander, had moved, with the rest of the Second Corps, into the Carrion Valley. The Fourth Corps, under the command of Marshal Lefebvre, and reinforced by the cavalry of General Milhaud, had headed from Valladolid towards Segovia, to turn the Somosierra passage, in case it could not be forced from the front. As a result of a misunderstanding in the orders, it crossed the Guadarama and went towards the Escorial, skirting the heads of the English columns, which were already at the height of Salamanca. Madrid had been hastily fortified by the Spaniards. General Morla commanded there with eight thousand regular troops, and thirty or forty thousand armed peasants. After two useless summons, the Emperor had some bombs thrown into the city and breached the Retiro, a royal castle surrounded by walls, and built on an eminence adjoining the enclosure. On the morning of the 3rd, Villatte's division entered the Retiro, crossed the Prado promenade, seized the barricades at the entrance to the streets, and took possession of the immense palace of the Duke of Medinaceli, one of the keys to the city. Disorder was at its height in Madrid; the populace knew no restraint, and the Spaniards were short of food. General Morla capitulated on the 4th, during the night. The regular troops, led by the Marquis of Castellan, managed to escape while negotiations were taking place. Napoleon took measures to restore tranquility, and established his headquarters at Chamartin, a country house a league from Madrid. There, on the 9th of December, he received the deputation of the city's officials and notables³.

In the meantime, the remains of the army of Andalusia, led by Lapeña, having escaped from the troops of Marshal Ney, left Guadalajara to approach Madrid. Marshal Bessières went to meet them with sixteen squadrons, supported by an infantry division. The Spaniards were pushed back beyond the Tagus, where they rallied under the orders of the Duke of Infantado, who brought them back to Cuenca.

While these events were taking place in the north of Spain, General Gouvion Saint-Cyr had entered Catalonia with the Seventh Corps. He opened the campaign on 5 November with the siege of Roses (*see the account of this siege, volume II*).

This place surrendered on 6 December. Two days later, General Gouvion Saint-Cyr marched on Barcelona, which General Vives had blockaded; he avoided the places of Girona and Hostalrich,

³ See supporting documents, No. 22

which guarded the only passable roads; and, without baggage, without artillery, with fifty cartridges per man, and almost without provisions, he made his way through the mountains, amidst the greatest obstacles. General Vives, informed of this bold march, finally decided to come to meet him; but General Gouvion Saint-Cyr won the battle of Cardedeu on 16 December, and thus unblockaded Barcelona. He let his troops rest for three days in this place. General Vives took advantage of this time to rally his army behind the Llobregat; but General Gouvion Saint-Cyr forced the passage of this river on 21 December and won the battle of Molino-del-Rey, which completed the rout of the Spanish army. He pursued the remains of it to the environs of Tarragona. This place was in a horrible anarchy, and barely in a state of defense: perhaps it would have opened its gates, if General Gouvion Saint-Cyr had presented himself under its walls; but he stopped at Villafranca, where he remained three months in cantonment. Reding, named general-in-chief in place of Vives, took advantage of this time to reorganize the Spanish army.

No. 19.

*Proclamation of the Emperor Napoleon to the soldiers of
the Grand Army as they pass through Paris.*

Paris, 11 September 1808.

Soldiers, after having triumphed on the banks of the Danube and the Vistula, you have crossed Germany by forced marches: today I am making you cross France without giving you a moment's rest.

Soldiers, *I need you*: the hideous presence of the leopard soils the continents of Spain and Portugal; let him flee in terror at your sight; let us carry our triumphant eagles to the Pillars of Hercules: *there too we have outrages to avenge*.

Soldiers, you have surpassed the fame of modern armies; but have you equaled the glory of the armies of Rome, which, in the same campaign, triumphed on the Rhine and the Euphrates, in Illyria and the Tagus?

A long peace, a lasting prosperity will be the price of your work. A true Frenchman cannot, must not rest until the seas are open and freed.

Soldiers, all that you have done, all that you will still do for the happiness of the French people and for my glory, will be eternally engraved in my heart.

No. 20.

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to Marshal
Ney, Duke of Elchingen, Commander of the Sixth Corps.*

Chamartin, 8 December 1808.

The Emperor, Marshal, has received the letter you wrote to me from Guadalajara. His Majesty orders that you return to Marshal Moncey everything that belongs to his army corps, and that may have followed yours; as, in the state of our troops, the Emperor does not see the Fourth Hussars there, let me know if you left it with Marshal Moncey. You are in a good country, Duke; let your army corps rest there tomorrow the 9th. Maintain good discipline; prevent pillaging; procure provisions for several days.

The English are fleeing at full speed; but we were for a moment in a serious situation. It is a mistake to have arrived here too late. It is one not to have followed the spirit of your first instructions: they informed you that Marshal Lannes was attacking the enemy on the 23rd, that you were intended to cut off and pursue Castaños, and consequently to move quickly on Agreda, without stopping for two days, as you did in vain, at Soria.

His Majesty does not approve of your having mixed your corps with that of Marshal Moncey; it was necessary to follow Castaños, and let the Duke of Conéglano lay siege to Saragossa. The Emperor cannot understand how, when you left Saragossa on the 2nd, you did not leave the Dessolles Division to Marshal Moncey, thereby exposing him to making a retrograde movement. Finally, Marshal, what is past is past, His Majesty knows your zeal too well to hold it against you; he will enable you to repair all that. The Emperor hesitated to give the order to the Dessolles Division and the Poles to return to Saragossa, in order to spare his troops some fatigue. His Majesty preferred to make changes to his later plans; he has just ordered Marshal Mortier's corps to head for Saragossa. You will find enclosed orders that you will give to General Lefebvre and General Beaumont. You will send me an officer from your staff tomorrow with the state of affairs of your army corps.

Signed: ALEXANDRE.

No. 21.

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to Marshal
Moncey, Duke of Conéglano, commander of the Third Corps.*

Chamartin, 8 December 1808, at noon.

The Emperor, Monsieur le Maréchal, received your letter of the 2nd of this month; I received your two letters of the 3rd. His Majesty sees with pain all your dispositions. Your army Corps is sufficient to surround Saragossa. The Emperor thinks that you should have kept your troops together constantly, and not mixed up Marshal Ney's with yours, as has been done. Marshal Ney was wrong not to leave you the Dessolles Division. This Marshal, in all his movements, made false dispositions and missed the goal of his operation. Today, Monsieur le Duc, we must remedy all that. His Majesty assumes that with your corps united, you will have advanced on Saragossa; but so that you may be in a strong and imposing position vis-à-vis the enemy, His Majesty charges me to order Marshal Mortier to leave the points where his army corps is located, that is to say, from Burgos, Briviesca, Pancorbo and Vitoria, to head by four different roads towards Logroño and Saragossa. Here, Mr. Marshal, is the will of the Emperor.

Marshal Duke of Trévise must with his army corps, if necessary, give you a hand to take the external works of Saragossa, if this has not already been done: then the precise order of the Emperor is, that with your army corps you alone be charged with the siege of Saragossa. Marshal Mortier will then place one of his divisions in position on the road from Saragossa to Barcelona, and the other of his divisions, with its headquarters, will be in position on the road from Madrid to Calatayud, to ensure communication with Madrid, so that, depending on events, Marshal Mortier's corps can move on Madrid or Barcelona, as the Emperor orders, according to the news that we have from General Gouvion Saint-Cyr. You must therefore, Marshal, take care never to mix your troops with those of Marshal Mortier. The capture of Madrid, the defeat of different armies of the insurgents must finally decide Saragossa: as soon as you have invested the place, and you have made the enemy return, you will send parliamentarians and enter into negotiations; offer the same capitulation as in Madrid: you will find a copy attached. It is a mistake, Marshal, that General Maurice Mathieu did not continue to pursue the enemy. You must feel that the two army corps were too many for Saragossa, when we had many enemies in mind, that the Emperor knew how to beat, and that he knew how to take Madrid with the First Corps alone.

Signed: ALEXANDRE.

Speech by Napoleon to the Grand Deputation of the City of Madrid, 9 December 1808.

I agree with the sentiments of the city of Madrid. I regret the harm it has suffered, and I hold it as a particular happiness to have been able, in these circumstances, to save it and spare it from greater harm.

I hastened to take measures that reassure all classes of citizens, knowing how painful uncertainty is for all peoples and for all men.

I have preserved the religious orders by restricting the number of monks. There is not a sensible man who did not judge that they were too numerous. Those who are called by a vocation that comes from God, will remain in their convents. As for those whose vocation was not solid, and determined by worldly considerations, I have ensured their existence in the order of secular ecclesiastics. From the surplus of the goods of the convents, I have provided for the needs of the curates, of this most interesting and most useful class among the clergy.

I have abolished this tribunal against which the century and Europe protested. Priests must guide consciences but must not exercise any external and corporeal jurisdiction over citizens.

I have satisfied what I owed to myself and to my nation; the share of vengeance is done, it has fallen on ten of the principal culprits: pardon is entire and absolute for the others.

I have suppressed rights usurped by the lords, in the time of civil wars, when kings were too often obliged to abandon their rights to buy their tranquility and the peace of the people.

I have abolished feudal rights, and everyone will be able to establish inns, ovens, traps, fisheries, and give free rein to their industry, by observing only the laws and regulations of the police. The selfishness, wealth and prosperity of a small number of men were more harmful to your agriculture than the heat of the dog days.

As there is only one God, there must be, in a State, only one justice. All particular justices had been usurped and were contrary to the rights of the nation: I have destroyed them.

I have also made known to everyone what they could have to fear, what they had to hope for.

I will drive the English armies from the Peninsula.

Saragossa, Valencia, Seville will be subdued, either by persuasion, or by force of arms.

There is no obstacle capable of delaying the execution of my wishes for long.

But what is beyond my power is to constitute the Spaniards into a body of nation, under the orders of the King, if they continue to be imbued with the principles of division and hatred towards France, which the partisans of the English and the enemies of the continent have spread

in the bosom of Spain. I cannot establish a nation, a king and the independence of the Spaniards, if this king is not sure of their affection and their fidelity.

The Bourbons can no longer reign in Europe. The divisions in the royal family had been fomented by the English. It was not King Charles and the favorite that the Duke of Infantado, instrument of England, as the papers recently found in his house prove, wanted to overthrow from the throne: it was the preponderance of England that was wanted to establish in Spain; insane project, the result of which would have been an endless land war, and which would have caused rivers of blood to flow. No power can exist on the continent, influenced by England. If there are any who desire it, their desire is insane and will sooner or later produce their ruin.

It would be easy for me, and I would be obliged to govern Spain by establishing as many viceroys as there are provinces. However, I do not refuse to cede my rights of conquest to the King, and to establish him in Madrid, when the thirty thousand citizens that this capital contains, ecclesiastics, nobles, merchants, lawyers, have manifested their feelings and their fidelity, set an example to the provinces, enlightened the people and made known to the nation that its existence and its happiness depend on a king and a liberal constitution, favorable to the people and opposed only to the selfishness and proud passions of the great.

If such are the feelings of the inhabitants of the city of Madrid, let its thirty thousand citizens assemble in the churches; let them take before the holy sacrament an oath that comes not only from the mouth, but from the heart, and that is without Jesuit restriction; let them swear support, love and fidelity to the King; that the priests in the confessional and in the pulpit, the merchants in their correspondence, the lawyers in their writings and speeches, inculcate these sentiments in the people: then I will relinquish the right of conquest, I will place the King on the throne, and I will make it a sweet task to behave towards the Spaniards as a faithful friend. The present generation may vary in its opinions, too many passions have been brought into play; but your nephews will bless me as your regenerator; they will place among the memorable days those on which I appeared among you, and from these days will date the prosperity of Spain.