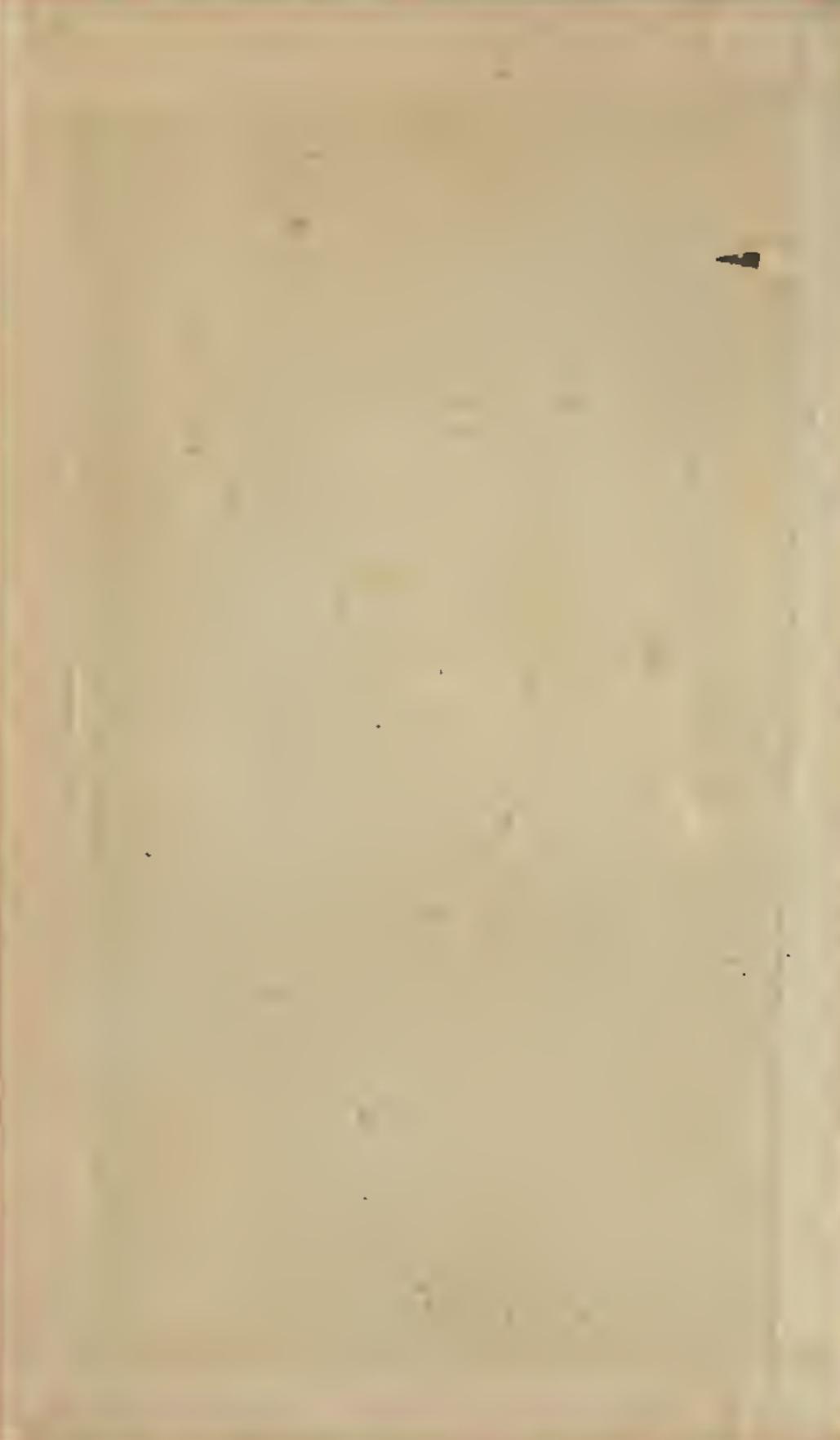


ACCOUNT
OF THE
BRITISH CAMPAIGN OF 1809
IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN,
BY THE
EARL OF MUNSTER.



P. P.

Arthur F. Swinford



Tripp's Chamber,
From the Author

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UNDER
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EDITION FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

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On the 18th of January, 1809, when the last transport, containing the rear guard of Sir. J. Moore's army, sailed from the harbour of Coruna, the British little foresaw that the Peninsula was still to be the arena for their conquests and renown. None were so sanguine as to hope that their splendid successes and example should yet cause Europe to regain the moral feelings she had lost under the long victorious career of France, or

that the latter country was finally to sink under their exertions.

Neither did Buonaparte suspect, when halting on the confines of the Galician mountains, and leaving to Soult the easy task of "driving the leopard into the sea," that his legions were soon to be checked and defeated; or that his vaunted representation of the broken-hearted and dismayed state of the British army, should, by the repulse of his troops within a few days after in a set battle, become a severe reflection on the conduct of his own soldiery. Neither Soult nor the Frenchmen under his command could have supposed, at the same period, how early the fate of war would create a total reverse in their hitherto prosperous campaigns; or that their corps, which had led the advance to Corunna, should soon become the *pursued*, and in a retreat not less disastrous than that they had just witnessed. But Buonaparte ever miscalculated, and at this time was wholly unacquainted with, the perseverance of our national character, or the power of England; and when he compared her apparent means with those of France, by showing she had not a million of infantry or one hundred thousand cavalry to oppose her rival, he had to learn the extent of her vast and boundless re-

sourees, and the determined character of her people.*

When this boastful and triumphant comparison was made, the ruler of France little feared that the refutation of England's inadequacy to cope with his power would be proved within seven years, by her hurling him from the throne, and leading him a captive at her chariot wheels, or that he should end his days in one of her distant colonies, in confinement and obscurity! Buonaparte thus considering the army expelled from Spain as the utmost extent of the means and exertion of the English as a military people, hastily concluded that they could not again appear on the continent. He naturally deduced from this, that the subjection of both Spain and Portugal was the inevitable consequence of his success in Galicia, and that it only required the time necessary for their occupation to secure them under Gallic sway.†

* This was not greatly exaggerated, if the artillery, the regular Foreign Regiments in the French service, and those of the various countries of Europe, at Buonaparte's disposal, are included.—'Sous le titre modeste de protecteur, Napoléon envahit l'argent et les soldats d'une moitié de l'Allemagne,' says Foy, speaking of the Confederation of the Rhine; and besides, he had the armies of Italy, Naples, Holland, and the Grand Duchy of Varsovie at his command.

† Cependant, parce que les Anglais s'étaient embarqués à la Corogne, Napoléon se complut dans l'idée qu'ils ne reparattraient

But how uncertain are the results of human calculation! At the moment when Buonaparte thought the Peninsula at his feet, the seeds of discontent sown by that restless ambition, which was urging him on to his ruin, began to develop themselves in a distant nation. Their growth to maturity was as rapid as opportune, and created a powerful diversion in favour of those countries to the southward suffering under his yoke.

The perhaps necessary employment of the French nation, and of the military feeling and spirit grown up since the revolution, which Napoleon fostered, had twice, previously to his invasion of Spain, caused him to direct his conquests against his most powerful military neighbour,—Austria.

The last campaign of 1806 left the family of Hapsburg indignant at their reverses, and on their vanquisher becoming entangled by his unjust aggression of Spain, they hoped a fit opportunity was offered for redeeming their character and importance in Europe. If the bold advance of Sir J. Moore into the heart of Spain, and his demonstration on Carrion, had made Buonaparte direct

point sur le continent, et que les Portugais, perdant tout espoir d'en être accourus, recevraient les Français en amis.—Telle était son aveugle confiance, que les mouvemens de l'armée étaient tracés par dates.—*Mémoires sur les Opérations Militaires des Français en Gallice, en Portugal, et dans la Vallée du Tage, en 1809.*

the most considerable portion of his armies on the front or flanks of the English, thus interrupting for a time, in other quarters, the rapidity of conquest, not less did the Austrian declaration of war, drawing off a portion of the resources of France, tend materially to the ultimate advantage of the rightful cause. Buonaparte was not only personally arrested from overrunning Spain by his return to France, but from directing a just combination among his dispersed marshals, which circumstance fortunately allowed England to regain a firm footing in the Peninsula, and, by the events of the succeeding campaign, an opportunity of renewing a good feeling and confidence in the people. Considering the reorganized Austrian as a more dangerous enemy than the broken Spaniards or expelled English, Buonaparte, on withdrawing from Astorga, only passed through Madrid, and returned to Paris. He, however, left (with the exception of the Imperial Guard, about 15,000 of whom had accompanied him across the Pyrenees,) his armies entire, under the command of his various marshals, to complete the subjugation of Spain.

Of these eight *corps d'armée*, (each equal to the whole British army in Spain in 1809,) which had crossed the frontier, five had co-operated directly or otherwise against Sir J. Moore. The sixth,

commanded by the gallant Ney, was ordered to remain in and reduce to control Galicia and the Asturias. The fourth, under Mortier, with a vast body of cavalry commanded by Kellerman, was to overawe Leon and Castille; while Victor, with the first corps, was at once to complete the ruin of the beaten Spanish armies, and to threaten the line of the Tagus, the south of Portugal, and eventually its capital. The eighth corps, which had, under Junot, served in 1807-8 in Portugal, and according to the convention of Cintra been carried to Rochelle, and subsequently recrossed Spain, and met their old antagonists before Corunna, was broken up, and its *débris* added to the second corps under Soult.*

This force was intended to take the active part of the campaign against Portugal, which country was to be immediately attacked, the orders to that effect being received within ten days after the embarkation of the British. So certain was Buonaparte of Soult's conquest, that he fixed the 5th of February for the arrival of his troops at Oporto—and the 16th of the same month for his triumphant entrance into Lisbon!

* At Corunna a soldier's wife, taken in the retreat, was sent in by Junot. She brought his compliments to the general officers he had known the preceding year, and a message that he and his corps were opposite them, ready to "pay off old scores."

The army under Soult consisted of 23,500 men, of which 4,000 were cavalry, divided into ten regiments. It was accompanied by fifty-six pieces of cannon. Besides these troops, a division under Gen. Lapisse was to be pushed south from Salamanca to invade Portugal, by the way of Almeida, at the same time becoming a point of communication between the corps of Victor and Soult.

The army of the latter General advanced to the southward, through Galicia, by several routes, but the principal part, with the artillery, marched through St. Jago. His directions were to invade Portugal along the sea-coast, and, with that view, he attempted to cross the Minho at Tuy, but failing, was forced to proceed up the right bank of the river as far as Orense, where he crossed that barrier. Besides the great loss of time from this disappointment and change of route, the army was much detained by the opposition of the peasantry and the remains of Romana's dispersed army, and it was only on the 10th of March it was able to enter Portugal, by the valley of the Tamega.

Though Soult met considerable opposition from Gen. Silveira,* the French army reached and

* This is the present Marquis de Chaves, who headed the insurrection in 1827, against the Constitution.

captured Chaves on the 12th, and Braga on the 20th, after defeating a corps of Portuguese troops under Baron Eben; and nine days subsequently, forced the entrenched lines covering Oporto, having been more than seven times longer on their march than had been calculated by Buonaparte. The next day Gen. Franceschi, with several regiments of cavalry, was pushed on to the banks of the Vouga, where he established his posts opposite those of Col. Trant, who had collected a few troops and ordenança, and a corps of volunteers, formed of the students of the University of Coimbra, who gave up their literary pursuits for the defence of their country. The division of Gen. Mermet was cantoned in Villa Nova, with the 31st regiment in its front in support of the cavalry. Soult's corps had been diminished upwards of 3,000 men within the two months occupied in its march, having left great numbers of sick at Chaves and Braga. Although it had overcome all opposition, its chief found himself in an isolated position, shut out from all intercourse with the other French corps, and his difficulties increasing every day, as he was obliged to separate and detach a considerable portion of his force to subdue the country, and attempt to open his communication with Lapisse.

But, however insecure and critical his post, it

was likely to become more immediately endangered by the activity of the British, whose Government, far from being discouraged at the result of the preceding year, was employed in preparation for a hearty prosecution of the contest. At the moment the British army withdrew from Corunna, the troops left in the Peninsula, including a brigade under Brigadier-Gen. Cameron, (which had advanced to the north-east frontier of Portugal,) the 14th Light Dragoons, and the sick, convalescents, and stragglers of Sir J. Moore's army, did not consist of above 7,000 men, under the command of Sir J. Craddock, at Lisbon. The want of information was great, and the state of alarm so exaggerated, that the advance of the French on that capital was daily expected. The artillery and cavalry were embarked, and the forts of St. Julien and Bugio dismantled, to prevent their guns being turned upon the ships while withdrawing from the Tagus.

The Portuguese felt the danger in which their country was placed, and the Regency called upon the people to rise *en masse*. They had little else than the populace to oppose the invader, as the same principle which had instigated the march of the Spanish corps under Romana to Denmark, had been acted upon with the only respectable part of the Portuguese army. These had been

sent into France under the Marquis de Lorna, and suffered a harder fate than the Spanish troops, the greater part of whom, by aid of the English fleet, returned to fight their country's battles, while the miserable remnant of the Portuguese perished at Moscow, under the appellation of the "*Légion Portugaise*." The remaining regular troops were scarcely to be considered as organized, and those under Silveira, though actuated by the best spirit, were little better than the rest. One regiment of two battalions, called the Lusitanian legion, raised by Sir R. Wilson at Oporto, was an exception to the general inefficiency, it having made considerable progress in discipline and order. Sir Robert had proceeded with the first battalion to the frontier opposite Ciudad Rodrigo, while the other, under Baron Eben, had been engaged in the defence of the Tras os Montes, and in the entrenchments around Oporto.

But this inefficient army had a probability of being regenerated. Scarce had the fleet returned from Corunna, when the British Government evinced its conviction that the Spanish and Portuguese cause was not hopeless, and, with a view to make the latter aid in their own defence, sent General Beresford with twelve or fourteen officers from England to re-organize and

form their army. This determination being made so soon afterwards, and before the despondency of the failure at Corunna had worn off, was much ridiculed at the time as being too late, and doubts were expressed if Lisbon would not be in the possession of the enemy before they could reach the Tagus. This anticipation was not confirmed by events, and, with the rank of a Portuguese Marshal, General Beresford, on the 13th of March, issued a spirited address to that nation, in which he assured them, that they only required organization and discipline to make them equal to face the invader. How just were the Marshal's ideas of their latent martial character, is to be learned from their brilliant conduct in the ensuing war. Much, however, was to be done to raise from degradation the military profession in Portugal. Perhaps in no age or country had it fallen so low. Even among the Chinese, where civil and literary celebrity is ever sought before that of arms, it was never so despised, as it had been among our faithful allies since the war of succession.

In 1762-3, La Lippe had been called in by the Marquis de Pombal, who formed the army into twenty-four regiments of infantry, twelve of cavalry, and four of artillery, and which had continued, at least nominally, till the arrival of Junot.

Few of his regulatious were permanent or long respected. During the whole of the latter half of the eighteenth century, in all the short successive wars, though occasionally invigorated by fresh disciplinarians from foreign countries, the Portuguese army never rose above mediocrity. It is true, but few opportunities were offered of trial, but in 1801, at Arronches, the scandalous panic that seized the corps commanded by the Duke d'Alafoes, made them to be considered worse than contemptible. Not that the people required either physical or moral qualities, as might be easily proved from their conflicts with the Spaniards: having ever placed themselves at least upon an equality, in courage and conduct, with their neighbours. The French, in their progress through the *Tras os Montes*, drew a favourable comparison of their bravery with that of the Spaniards, while it was impossible to see the peasantry and not be convinced of their bodily strength and capability of bearing fatigue.

The difficulty of creating a Portuguese army lay not with the men but with the officers, who had sunk so low in the estimation of the country, of themselves, and of their men, as to be little superior to the degrading and menial offices, (as when *La Lippe* arrived in 1762,) they once filled, of servants in the houses of the nobility.

No improvement had offered itself since those disgraceful times, which had naturally placed them on terms of the greatest familiarity and equality with their men. It was no uncommon spectacle to find them in a common *cabaret* gambling, if not cheating the soldiers out of the pay they had just made over to them. It was not less to counteract this deteriorating cause, than to organize the soldiers, that Gen. Beresford had taken officers with him from England, whose numbers were subsequently greatly increased. Those who accompanied him in the first instance; and some who afterwards joined him, were, with the view to place British Captains in command of battalions, first raised a step of rank in their own service, and received another in that of the Portuguese, when appointed to regiments.

The Marshal established his head-quarters at Thomar, and fairly grappled with all the prominent difficulties, and, aided by the example and conduct of the officers placed under his orders, at once did away the causes of the want of respect and confidence of the men. The interior economy was strictly investigated, and the regiments made efficient, not only by British arms and equipments, but by being subsidized to fight their own battles by the money of England.

Without going farther into detail, it will be

sufficient to remark, that the arrangement and system of the Marshal were so good, and improvement so rapid in the Portuguese army, that within two months from the date of his first order, a battalion of the 16th regiment was brought into collision with the enemy; and if it did not distinguish itself as much as it did on so many subsequent occasions, it evinced neither confusion nor dismay. Eighteen months after, the general conduct of the whole Portuguese army was marked by traits of discipline and bravery, and even of individual gallantry, which continued on the increase to the end of the war, and which were most unquestionably shown on many subsequent occasions, by overthrowing the veterans of France with the bayonet.

The twenty-four regiments of the line formed by La Lippe had been broken into two battalions each in 1797, and were continued at that establishment; as were the twelve regiments of cavalry, of which not above one-third had been ever mounted. The artillery was placed under British officers, as well as the other arms. To this the whole population was to be added, though as irregulars or *ordenanza*, rather than militia. This force was increased in the course of the next year, by six regiments of Caçadores, which were, at a later period during the war, doubled, on their value being duly appre-

ciated. But England was not less active in sending reinforcements of her own troops to the Peninsula. Doubts had been once entertained, whether future operations should be carried on from the south of Spain, rather than from Portugal; and the first convoy of troops was directed to Cadiz. On its reaching that port, the besotted Spaniards hesitated, as they had the year before when Sir D. Baird arrived at Corunna, respecting the disembarkation of the troops. After some futile negotiations, and (in consequence of the slow advance of the French,) in the revived hope of saving Lisbon, the British troops, fortunately, passed to the latter place, as the frontier statistics of Portugal are better calculated for military operations than those of Andalusia.

The first reinforcement that reached the Tagus early in March was commanded by Lieut.-Gen. Sherbrooke, which was followed in the beginning of April by another, under Major-Gen. Hill, together increasing the army to 13,000 men. Their arrival allayed much alarm, and not only allowed Sir J. Craddock to take up a position out of Lisbon, and cover the great roads that led upon it, with the right on Santarem, and the left on the Sea, but even to contemplate offensive operations, and in the middle of April to push the army in advance towards the North.

In the mean time, the administration at home

had determined to give the command of the army for the defence of Portugal to the same general officer who had so successfully attacked it the year before, and, in order to make room for him, Sir J. Craddock was appointed to be Governor of Gibraltar.

Sir A. Wellesley sailed on the 16th of April on board the *Surveillant*, Sir George Collier, from Portsmouth, to which place or to England he did not again return, until 1814, as Duke of Wellington, when, on his first arrival from the south of France, his Grace proceeded direct to the same town—where the Prince Regent was showing to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia the arsenal and fleet.

The same night the frigate was nearly lost off St. Catherine's Head in the Isle of Wight: so imminent was the danger, and so close the ship to the breakers, that Sir G. Collier desired Sir Arthur to dress, and, thinking the loss of the vessel certain, advised him to stay by the wreck as long as possible, this being considered a more probable means of escape than a premature attempt to reach the shore. The frigate missed stays more than once: but a fortunate start of wind off the land prevented her wreck.* Even had all escaped with life, but for this

* The author was himself on board as Aide-de-Camp to Brig. General the Hon. Charles Stewart, the present Marquess of Londonderry.—Ed.

shift of wind, (or rather the never failing happy destiny of Sir Arthur, who might have desired Sir G. Collier not to despair, while he had not Cæsar, but Wellesley and his fortunes on board) much valuable time would have been lost, not only as to striking the blow at Soult, but by allowing fresh combinations between the distant French Marshals, and perhaps not giving the opportunity of opposing them in detail.

The entrance of the *Surveillant* into the *Tagus* was an interesting event, when, at a distance of twenty years, it is considered, that she bore in her bosom the regeneration of England's military fame, and that Europe was to date from it the positive commencement of that formidable and permanent position taken up by our armies, which allowed its nations to breathe, and subsequently, by our victories over the common enemy, to break the spell of gloomy conviction, becoming daily universal, that the French armies were invincible.

Sir Arthur's landing at Lisbon on the 22nd of April was strongly marked by the gratifying expression of the people's feeling; they hailed him as their former deliverer, and evinced their gratitude by illuminating the city during his stay. On the 25th Sir J. Craddock, in a farewell address, bade adieu to the army, and two days

subsequently Sir Arthur took the command, and in his first order changed its staff, placing Brig.-Gen. the Hon. Charles Stewart at the head of the Adj.-General's, and Col. Murray, 3d Guards, at that of the Quarter-master General's department. The same day his Excellency went in procession with the royal carriages, escorted by a squadron of the 16th dragoons, to be introduced to the Regency, at the palace of the Inquisition in the Rocio, on his receiving from them the rank of Marshal General.

The state of affairs in the Peninsula at this time was neither satisfactory nor encouraging. Although Buonaparte had withdrawn from Spain, his legions, which had passed through Madrid, and witnessed the replacing Joseph on the throne, had subsequently overthrown all the Spanish armies. The advanced guard of the Duke del Infantado's army under Vanegas had been beaten at Ucles in January, and the army of Cartojal had met a defeat at Ciudad Real. Cuesta, with the main Spanish army, after retiring across the Tagus, and taking position at Almaraz, had allowed his flank to be turned by the bridge of Arzobispo, and was forced, in consequence, to retreat across the Guadiana, when, at Medellin on its banks, he was on the 28th of March completely routed, through the bad conduct of his

cavalry. His infantry, who from their behaviour on this occasion deserved a better fate, were so completely, —not at the mercy, for none was shown, but—in the power of the enemy's cavalry, that their horsemen were worn out with slaughtering their easily routed victims; and it was reported, many wore their arms for several days in slings, from having had such opportunity of using their sabres. The remnant of the Spanish army took refuge in the Sierra Morena, where attempts were made to recruit the infantry—the dastardly cavalry, not less disgraced in the action by their conduct, than after by the General's notice of it, scarcely requiring a man. While so little aid was to be expected for the British from these broken armies, Victor was left with 22,000 men, in a position threatening the weakest part of Portugal, and, by the existence of the bridge of Alcantara, both banks of the Tagus.

But in the mean time, Soult's position at Oporto had become more critical every day. Vigo had surrendered to the Spaniards, aided by some English ships, while Silveira had retaken Chaves, with 1,300 sick, and had continued his advance by Amarante to Penafiel. Lapisse had advanced as far as Ciudad Rodrigo, but, on finding himself opposed by Sir R. Wilson and the Spanish troops, he made

no attempt to communicate with or join Soult, and, after a little skirmishing, passed on to join Victor on the Tagus. Soult's communications were thus wholly destroyed, and his force had been much dispersed in trying to make them good; not less than between six and 7000 men having been sent into the valley of the Tamega and other points. But, although Marshal Soult had not above half the number of men collected at Oporto that Victor's army consisted of, still the British army was not strong enough to oppose both at once. It became necessary, therefore, to act with vigour on one point, and the former army being the weakest, and in the Portuguese territory, while its retreat was endangered, drew the more immediate attention of the British General. Lest Victor should be enabled to advance to the south of the Tagus, Sir Arthur lost no time at Lisbon, and, after a stay of but six days, set out on the 23d for the army, part of which had arrived at Coimbra. All the towns were illuminated on the road, and on his Excellency's arrival at Coimbra on the 2d, in addition to other demonstrations of joy, the ladies from the balconies covered him with roses and sugar-plums!

The army was brigaded anew on the 4th of May.

Cavalry.

MAJOR-GEN. COTTON.
 14th Light Dragoons.
 20th — —
 16th — —
 3rd — — King's G. L^a.

Infantry.

BRIG.-GEN. H. CAMPBELL.
 2 Battalions of Guards.
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

First Brigade.

MAJOR-GEN. HILL.
 3rd or Buffs
 66th Regiment.
 48th —
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Third Brigade.

MAJOR-GEN. TILSON.
 5 Comp. 5 Batt. 60 Regt.
 88th Regiment.
 1 Batt. Port^o, Grenadiers.
 87th Regiment.

Fifth Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. A. CAMPBELL.
 7th Fnsileers.
 1 Batt. 10th Port^o, Regt.
 53rd Regiment.
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Seventh Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. CAMERON.
 9th Regiment
 2nd Batt. 10th Port^o, Regt.
 83rd Regiment
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Sixth Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. STEWART.
 1st Batt. Detachments.
 1st Batt. 16th Port^o, Regt.
 29th Regiment.

Fourth Brigade.

BRIG.-GEN. SONTAG.
 2nd Batt. Detachments.
 1st. Batt. 16th Port^o, Regt.
 79th Regiment.
 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regt.

Second Brigade.

MAJOR-GEN. M'KENZIE.
 27th Regiment
 45th —
 31st —

King's German Legion.

MAJOR-GEN. MURRAY.
 1 Brigade (2 Regiments)
 BRIG.-GEN. LANGWORTH.
 2 Brigade (2 Regiments)
 BRIG.-GEN. DRIEBOURG.

It was subsequently divided into wings under Lieut.-Gens. Sherbrooke and Paget, and the cavalry placed under Lieut.-Gen. Payne. The same reasons that pressed the departure of the Commander of the Forces from Lisbon, accelerated the preparations of the campaign, and advance upon Oporto. A few days' delay were, however, necessary to complete the arrangements, according to the following plan of operations. While Sir A. advanced with the main force of the army on the enemy's front, a corps that quitted Coimbra on the 5th, was intended to move on the enemy's left flank and rear. This was to be under the orders of Marshal Beresford, and consisted of Maj.-Gen. Tilson's brigade, and some cavalry. It was ordered to direct its march on Viseu, and across the Douro, to co-operate with Silveira. This officer was unfortunately driven from Amarante on the 2d of May, the enemy thus opening to themselves a practicable route for carriage to the eastern frontier. Lisbon was to be covered during these northern operations by a corps of observation, under Maj.-Gen. M'Kenzie, to watch Victor. It was posted at Santarem, consisting of the General's own brigade, a brigade of British heavy cavalry, and 7,000 Portuguese. In his front at Alcantara, was Col. Mayne, with a battalion of the Lusitanian legion.

On the 6th, opportunity was taken of inspecting that portion of the army around Coimbra, on some sands two miles from the town. The British troops appeared in excellent order, and the Portuguese regiments, though not so soldier-like as their allies, looked better than was expected, as it was the fashion of the day to hold them in utter contempt. Their dark olive complexions, and blue single-breasted coats, gave them a *sombre* appearance when in contrast with our countrymen, and it could not be denied that the comparison was to the advantage of the latter. It was a fine sight, although of the 21,000 British in Portugal, only 17,000 were present, on account of the two detachment corps.*

On the 7th, part of these troops advanced in two columns on the main roads towards Oporto, by Adiha on the Vouga, and by the bay of Aveiro to Ovar. On the 9th, the remainder of the army and head quarters quitted Coimbra in the same direction. The advance of the French under Gen. Franceschi had remained on the Vouga, and arrangements were made for surprising it on the 10th.† If the success of this *coup d'essai*

* The French called the British force with which we advanced against Oporto, 30,000 men.

† Franceschi was an old opponent of Gen. Stewart, the Adjutant-General having commanded the brigade, of which a

was to be taken as a sample of our future proceedings, it would have been unfortunate, as, between the neighing of the horses of the Portuguese cavalry, and the stupidity of the guides, the enemy were prepared, and the whole was a complete failure. But for the withdrawing of the French, and the capture of two four-pounders, we had little to boast in the scrambling skirmish it produced. We advanced to the spot where they had been encamped, which was as much chosen for beauty of situation as strength. We had here the first instance of the trouble the French took in embellishing their camps; in the centre of the front they were erecting a pretty wooden obelisk.

On the following day the army advanced on the great northern road, and, about twelve o'clock, a squadron of the enemy was seen on the skirts of a wood, in front of a little village. On some three-pounders and our cavalry advancing against them, they fell back, but showed some infantry, and our light troops were directed to attack them. This produced some skirmishing as we continued to advance. The country was much inclosed; the enemy clung longer to their ground than was expected, as we only portion had been surprised at Rueda in Leon, a few months before, during the Corunna campaign.

supposed it an affair of posts; but a column of infantry on a height over the village of Grijon soon convinced us that it was at least a strong advanced guard. The road here crossed a ridge of hills, at right angles, covered with olives and fir woods, which offered a strong position. The ground was not ill chosen, though the left was without any *appui*. Brigadier Gen. Stewart's brigade formed in line to the support of the 16th Portuguese regiment, acting as skirmishers on the left of the road, while the German light infantry were engaged on the right. The four battalions of the German legion brought their left shoulders up, and marched diagonally across to turn the left, the enemy's weak point. The skirmishing was very sharp in the woods, and the 29th regiment was forced to support the Portuguese, who were once obliged to fall back. At this moment they pushed a column of infantry down the road through the village of Grijon, which being reported to Sir Arthur, he replied in the most quiet manner, "If they come any farther, order the battalion of detachments to charge them with the bayonet."

The officers of the staff, many of them at that time young soldiers, could not help evincing strong feeling on hearing the simple and distinct manner in which this order was given;

but before some months had passed over their heads, they had opportunities of not only hearing, but seeing them carried into execution. On this occasion the alternative mentioned by Sir Arthur did not occur, as, on their flank being turned, and finding our whole force on their front, about two o'clock they retired from their position. Our guns were brought up to bear upon them in their retreat, Brig-Gen. Charles Stewart put himself at the head of two squadrons, and trotted after the enemy, who withdrew their troops with astonishing rapidity. The country was much inclosed and intersected, and, on nearing the enemy's rear guard, the cavalry entered a deep ravine, closely wooded. The French lined the sides with their light infantry, who opened a close and sharp fire, which, for a moment, created some confusion, and checked the advance; but on coming in sight of five companies, drawn up in line in a wider space, by the exertion and example of the General, the latter led them to the charge, broke through the enemy, and made above one hundred prisoners. This rapid movement threw the 31st French regiment off the road of retreat, and they fell back on Ovar, where finding Maj.-Gen. Hill, they withdrew, after some skirmishing, to Oporto, during the night. Thus ended the operations of this day, which were beauti-

ful in their prosecution and satisfactory in the result.

The enemy's corps (besides the cavalry engaged the day before on the Vouga,) consisted of 4 or 5,000 infantry of the division of Mermet, which had been pushed on to this ground from Villa Nova on the 8th, on Soult's hearing of our probable advance. It was the 47th of the line that was charged on the retreat, and however valiantly they may have acted, they cannot be praised for prudence or judgment in forming a line to receive cavalry.* Instead of this, had they vaulted over the enclosures, or scrambled up the banks, they might have killed every man of the cavalry without endangering a soldier. One of the privates was very loud in his attempts to draw notice, and by his vociferation, that he was the son of a marquis, proved the aristocratic feeling not quite deadened by the revolution, though the conscription had reached and levelled all ranks of society. Our loss was under one hundred men: one officer of the 16th Dragoons received no less than three balls, though happily none proved mortal.

* In the French account of this campaign, published at Paris 1821, the Author represents *le 47^e de ligne*, when covering this retreat, as "*se conduisant valeureusement.*"

Our first progress to the front, on the morning of the 12th, showed us the horrors produced by a war of invasion. Beyond Grijon nine bodies of unfortunate Portuguese peasants were seen hanging on trees by the side of the road, blackened in the sun. The common people, naturally considering the enemy as *hors de la loi*, sought every means, open or otherwise, for their destruction. This brought on them that retaliation produced by the military ideas of a regular army, who conceived they had only a right to be opposed by *soldiers*, and not by the unclothed and unorganized population. These they considered as insurgents and brigands, and shot and hung, with as little compassion as we should a burglar. The exasperation of the French was not wholly uncalled-for, as the atrocities committed on the stragglers and sick were horrible, amounting often, besides shocking lingering deaths, to frightful mutilations.

A hair-dresser who escaped from Oporto in the night, had brought in, soon after day-break, the intelligence that the enemy had destroyed the bridge of boats over the Douro at one o'clock; and the still more disagreeable information, that all the boats were secured on the other side the Douro. On the fugitive barber being taken to Sir Arthur by Colonel Waters of the Adjutant General's Department, that officer was instructed

to proceed immediately to the banks of the river, and directed to procure boats, *coute qui coute*.

As we advanced on the high road to Oporto, this report of the destruction of the bridge was confirmed, and doubts came fast and thick upon us, respecting the passage of the Douro in the face of an enemy. On our arrival at Villa Nova, we found General Hill's brigade arrived from Ovar, and with the troops of the centre column choking the streets; through these Sir Arthur threaded his way, and took post on the right of the town in the garden of the convent of Sicra. From this elevated spot the whole city was visible, like a panorama, and nothing that passed within it could be hidden from the view of the British general. The French guards and sentries were seen in the various parts of the town, but no bustle was evinced, or even apparent curiosity. No groups were noticed looking at us, which was afterwards accounted for, by learning that the French were ordered to remain in their quarters ready to turn out, and the Portuguese not allowed to appear beyond the walls of their houses. There were a few sentries in the quays, but none without the limits or above the town. A line of baggage discovered retiring beyond the town across the distant hills, was the sole indication of our threatening neighbourhood.

The passage of a river in the front of an enc-

ny is allowed to be the most difficult of military operations ; and when it became obvious, from the collection of boats on the other bank, that precautions had been taken to secure them from us, the barrier appeared insurmountable. General Murray had been directed to march in the morning to try and cross the river, about five miles up at Aventas, but having only four battalions and two squadrons, unless we could aid his successful passage, he would lie open to defeat ; and in consequence our anxiety was very great to establish ourselves on the opposite bank. In the meanwhile Colonel Waters (who has since become so distinguished for his intelligence and activity) had passed up the left bank of the river, searching for means to cross it, and about two miles above the city, found a small boat lying in the mud. The peasantry demurred at going over to the other side to procure some larger boats seen on the opposite bank ; but the Colonel, (from speaking Portuguese like a native,) learned that the Prior of Amarante was not distant from the spot, and hoped by his influence to attain his object. This patriotic priest, on learning the desire of the British, joined with Colonel Waters in inducing the peasants, after some persuasion, to accompany the Colonel across, who brought back four boats.

When our doubts and fears were at the highest,

this agreeable information arrived, and was received by all with the greatest satisfaction, while three companies of the Buffs, accompanied by General Paget, were immediately conveyed to the other side.

The spot at which they passed over and landed was about half a mile above the city, at the foot of a steep cliff, up which a zigzag road, or winding path, led to a vast unfinished brick-building, standing on the brink. This was intended as a new residence for the bishop, and placed in the Prado, being surrounded by a wall with a large iron-gate, opening on the road to Vallongo. It was a strong post, and the three companies, on gaining the summit, threw themselves into it, as it at once covered the place of disembarkation, and was for themselves a good means of defence. Our artillery was posted on the high bank, on the other side, completely commanding the Prado and the Vallongo road.

Soult had his quarters on the side of the city near the sea, and, having collected all the boats, as he supposed, on the right bank, considered himself in perfect security. He thought if we made any attempt to cross, it would be in conjunction with our ships lying off the bar, and all his attention was directed to that quarter. He even turned into ridicule the first report of our

having crossed, and discredited the fact to the last, until it was incontestably proved by our firing. The boats had made more than one trip before any one in the town appeared to notice it. Foy has the credit of being the first to discover our having passed, and he instantly ordered the drums of the nearest battalion to beat the *general*. We heard the drums beat when nearly the whole of the Buffs had crossed, and soon saw symptoms of bustle and confusion in the town, and the French regiments forming on their parades. This was an anxious moment, and just as the whole of the Buffs had landed, a battalion was observed moving down a road towards them. This was the 17th, brought down by Foy, and which was quickly supported by the 70th. The first made an attack on the Buffs, who stood their ground, giving a tremendous fire, while our artillery from the opposite side killed and wounded a great number of the enemy.

More boats, in the mean time, were brought across and more troops; the 48th, 66th, and a Portuguese battalion landed, and not only defended themselves successfully, but even drove the enemy from the walls, between the town and the bishop's palace. This petty success was seen by Sir Arthur and his staff, who cheered our soldiery as they chased the enemy from the various

posts. The enemy's troops now came through the town in great numbers, and obliged our troops to confine themselves to the enclosure. They continued running along the road towards and beyond the iron-gate, while our shells and shot were whizzing through the trees and between the houses into the road as they passed. They brought up a gun through the gate to batter the house; but this proved an unfortunate experiment, as our troops increasing in number by fresh embarkations, (though General Paget was wounded), charged and captured it. They also brought some guns to bear from the open spaces in the town, but they were tamely if not badly served. But General Murray had made good his position on the north bank of the river, and we soon descried him making as much show as possible, marching with his ranks open towards the Vallongo road, thus threatening the communication of the enemy with Loison. He was not, however, strong enough to interrupt the retreat of 10,000 desperate men; for the French now began to think of nothing else, and directed their march toward Amarante. On their deserting the quays, the Portuguese jumped into the boats, which soon transported across, (amidst the cheers of the people and the waving of pocket-handkerchiefs by the women from the windows,) the

guards and General Stewart's brigade, who proceeded through the town with the greatest speed.

The Buffs, in the mean time, had dashed into the city and cut off a battery of Light Artillery in retreat, which, becoming jammed between that regiment, and the 29th received the fire of both, and was captured. The flight of the enemy was continued, but they were overtaken by the two squadrons which had passed with General Murray, led by Brig.-Gen. Charles Stewart, who charged the rear and made 200 prisoners. Major Hervey, who commanded the Dragoons, lost his arm. The enemy collected their scattered troops at some distance, but continued their retreat towards Amarante in the night. Our loss did not exceed 120 men, while the enemy, besides killed and wounded, left in our hands 500 prisoners and 1000 sick in the hospitals, and several pieces of cannon. The city was illuminated at night, and Sir Arthur, without allowing himself any rest, the same evening gave out an order of thanks to the army. The operations of the three preceding days had been most gratifying, and the quickness with which the enemy had been forced from his various positions and pursued, seldom equalled. The army had advanced 80 miles in four days, three of which were in constant presence of the enemy.

Sir Arthur had completely surprised in his quarters one of the most distinguished French Marshals, and consummated in his face the most difficult operation in war, that of crossing a deep and rapid river before an enemy. Nothing can relieve Soult from the disgrace of this day; and all that has been or whatever may be written in his defence, can but palliate his want of precaution and fatal security. The rapidity of Sir Arthur's own movements had been wonderful; for within twenty-six days since leaving Portsmouth, Oporto was captured and the enemy in full retreat. Captain Fitzroy Stanhope, one of the Commander-of-the-Forces' aide-de-camps, was sent to England with the dispatches of this success by one of the ships cruising off the port, whose crews from the sea had seen the smoke of the firing during the actions of the 11th and 12th.

The retreat of the enemy was directed upon Amarante, the seizure of that place from Silveira by Loison, ten days before, having opened them a loop-hole for escape. But Marshal Beresford, after crossing the Douro at Pedro de Regoa, had joined Silveira, and on the 11th drove Loison out of Amarante, and thus closed the road and the enemy's hopes in that direction. Loison fell back on Guimaraens by the good carriage-road

that led to Chaves, sending information of his movement to Soult at Oporto. Soult on his arrival at Penafiel, on the night of the 12th, received this disagreeable news, and finding himself pressed in so many directions, and no road open for carriages, determined at once to destroy the heavy material of his corps and to join Loison across the Sierra de Santa Catherina, at Guimaraens. Capt. Mellish, who was sent on the morning of the 13th to Penafiel, confirmed the report which had reached Oporto, of the destruction of their ammunition-waggons, guns, and carriages. The cannon had been placed mouth to mouth and discharged into each other, by trains laid communicating through the mass of baggage and ammunition waggons.

Want of provisions and uncertainty of the enemy's route prevented the advance of the army on the 13th, but the Germans were pushed on with some six-pounders on the road of the enemy's retreat. On ascertaining that the enemy had given up the idea of retreating by Amarante, orders were sent to Marshal Beresford, to direct his march on Chaves, at which place he arrived on the 16th, detaching Silveira in the direction of the enemy's rear on Ruivaens. On the 14th, the army advanced half-way on the road towards Braga. Soult collected his army, (the garrison of

Braga retiring on our advance) on the morning of the 15th at Guimaraens, but finding our troops at Villa Nova de Famillacao, and no road open for cannon, he destroyed the baggage and the military chest of Loison's corps, and in despair took to the Goat-herds' paths across the mountain, trusting to the interest, aid, and information procured by the Bishop of Braga. Their army was in great confusion during the 13th, but the two following days it became totally disorganized. The paths were so narrow, that but one man could pass at a time, and the cavalry were obliged to lead their horses, while their column, thus distressingly lengthened, had the additional misery of incessant rain that fell in torrents during the whole of this trying period. The peasantry, happy in revenging the horrors and atrocities of their enemy's advance, watched them like vultures, and failed not to dart upon all who sunk under fatigue; the stones they rolled on them swept whole files into the abysses, while single shots from the mountain-tops slew soldiers in the column of march. Their sufferings met commiseration from the British alone, who had not suffered from the guilty acts for which they were now receiving retribution.

Their *déroute* was so complete, that Sir A. Wellesley thought it unnecessary to follow them

with the whole army beyond Braga, which city he reached on the 16th. The probability of Victor's threatening the south was also to be taken into consideration, and he therefore contented himself in pursuing with some cavalry, the Guards, and Brig.-Gen. Cameron's brigade, while the Germans, following the enemy, even with three-pounders, across the Sierra de Santa Catherina, reached Guimaraens the same day. The French continued their retreat, and on the night of the 15th reached Salamonde, where their position was most alarming. They found one of the bridges on the Cavado, on the road to Ruivaens, destroyed and occupied, while that called Pontè Nova only offered a single beam. They, however, surprised and killed the Portuguese who guarded the last, and this proved the safety of their army. They restored the troops into some order on the night between the 15th and 16th, while the bridge was being repaired, which was made passable by the morning, and allowed them to continue their march towards Montalegre, leaving a rear-guard at Salamonde. Our cavalry discovered them about half-past one o'clock, but the Guards did not arrive until late. The position of the enemy was behind a deep and wide ravine, accessible only by the road, with their right on the torrent, and the left upon a ridge of

broken mountains. The light troops were directed to turn this point, and when sufficiently on their flank, about half past six, the column and two-three-pounder guns, which had joined from Gen. Murray's column, were pushed along the road to attack in front. The enemy, who had placed their pickets, thinking the cavalry were the only troops up, and hoping to continue all night, instantly retired from the position, and, as it was almost dark, little advantage could be taken of the confusion in which they fled, farther than that of the guns firing on their columns, and the light infantry pressing them *en tirailleur*. A few prisoners were made, among whom was an officer. The rain continued incessant, and the miserable village scarcely allowed cover for a quarter of the troops.

The next morning the disasters of the enemy in their flight of the night before were fully revealed by the wreck left at and near the bridge over the Cavado. The bridge had been only partially repaired, and the infantry were obliged to file, and the cavalry to lead their horses across. The passage must have been ever dangerous, but the confusion occasioned by our pursuit and cannonade, and the darkness of the night, rendered it to a degree hazardous. The rocky torrent of the Cavado, in consequence, presented next

morning an extraordinary spectacle. Men and horses, sumpter animals and baggage, had been precipitated into the river, and literally choked the course of the stream. Here, with these fatal accompaniments of death and dismay, was disgorged the last of the plunder of Oporto, and the other cities north of the Douro. All kinds of valuable goods were left on the road, while above 300 horses, sunk in the water, and mules laden with property, fell into the hands of the grenadier and light companies of the guards. These active-fingered gentry soon found that fishing for boxes and bodies out of the stream produced pieces of plate, and purses and belts full of gold and silver; and, amidst scenes of death and destruction, arose shouts of the most noisy merriment.

Soult reached the pass of Ruivaens before Silveira, or his capture would have been certain; but at that place learning that Marshal Bressford had arrived at Chaves, he turned the head of his columns towards Montalegre. The British army being greatly distressed from fatigue, want of provisions, and bad weather, only advanced a league on the 17th; but a squadron of cavalry and a battalion of Germans, were pushed to the bridge of Miserele and Villa da Ponte. On the 18th, the Guards, Germans, and Brig.-Gen. Cameron's brigade, pushed on in pursuit of the

enemy, whose track might have been found from the *débris* of baggage, dead and dying men, (worn down by fatigue and misery to skeletons,) houghed mules, and immense quantities of cartridges, which the wearied soldiery threw away to lighten themselves from even the weight of the balls.

Marshal Beresford had directed Silveira to march on Montalegre, but he arrived about two hours too late, the enemy having dragged their weary march along by that town and across the frontier, at twelve o'clock. This was witnessed by some of our officers, who had pushed on, and observed their distressed and miserable state. On our arrival at Montalegre, we saw their retiring columns in march fairly over the Spanish frontier, and a village on their route in flames. However, Col. Talbot, of the 14th light dragoons, followed the enemy's route for some way, and made prisoners an officer and 50 men. Marshal Beresford crossed the frontier, but proceeded no farther than Ginso, on hearing that Sir Arthur had given up the pursuit. The Commander-of-the-Forces, from the advices received from Gen. M'Kenzie, had become anxious respecting the line of the Tagus, and, being content with seeing the enemy across the frontier, desisted from a more northern advance, and ordered the troops to

be cantoned in the nearest villages, wherever the order might reach them.

Thus ended this short but active operation of twelve days, in which the disasters of the Corunna campaign were repaid on the corps of Soult with interest, as the distress and misery of the enemy were more considerable than we had suffered in the preceding January. Instead of the fine Gallician road of retreat, they were obliged to file through mule and even goat-herd paths, while the incessant rain was more distressing than the snow. The French had not stores and supplies to fall back upon, but, on the contrary, passed through the most unproductive wilds in the valleys and mountains. But the difference of the circumstances of the two retreats marks their degrees of misery. The peasantry, while friendly to us in Galicia, evinced, in the *Tras os Montes*, every mark of hatred to the enemy, whose cruelties had well deserved severe retributive justice. This was carried to a distressing extent, and though it kept the French together, added greatly to the extent of their loss. Our army was never so disorganized in Galicia as that of the French, who could not have attempted to fight a battle at Montalegre, as we did at Corunna. The loss of men (including Soult's invasion and retreat) seems to have been nearly equal; but the enemy, besides

the military chest and baggage, (of which we only sacrificed a part,) left the whole of their artillery, while we embarked ours safely at Corunna. But Soult saw that his escape could be alone confined to his men, and barely avoided capture, if not destruction, by sacrificing the whole of his *matériel*. The fortunate chance of finding a traitor in the Bishop of Braga tended to the safety of their retreat, which had been constantly endangered, and would have been intercepted, had he continued his march from Salamonde, on Chaves, instead of Montalegre.

Intelligence from the south of Victor's intention to invade Portugal had induced Sir A. Wellesley to avoid pushing more troops beyond Braga than was absolutely necessary, in order that they should be as near and as ready as practicable, to proceed against Victor. This Marshal, having been joined by Lapisse, hoping to create a diversion in favour of Soult, seized, with a corps of 12 to 14,000 men, the bridge of Alcantara, and pushed his patrols to Castello Branco. This movement required strict attention, and rendered necessary a more speedy retrograde movement from the northern frontier than would have been desired after the fatigues of the troops; but, only allowing two days' rest at Oporto, they were withdrawn to Coimbra, by the same routes by which

they had advanced. Head-quarters were on the 23rd at Coimbra. Here the Portuguese regiments, which had acted with us in the *Tras os Montes*, were ordered to form the garrison of Oporto. These regiments had given some hopes of good promise, yet none were so sanguine at this time as to expect from them their subsequent bravery and efficiency.

Sir Arthur continued his route on the 5th to Thomar, where we found the heavy brigade, consisting of the 3rd dragoon guards and 4th dragoons, which had disembarked while we were in the north, and appeared in excellent condition. Head-quarters were established at Abrantes on the 8th of June, from whence Major-Gen. M'Kenzie, on our advance, had been pushed forward to Castello Branco; as Victor, finding that Soult's retreat had left Portugal free from danger in the north, considered his own position less tenable, and had withdrawn from the north of the Tagus. The French army soon afterwards fell back from Caseres upon Merida and Medellin.

Although it was understood that Sir Arthur's orders only extended to the defence of Portugal, yet he felt that these stirring times required active exertions from all Europe, and that tranquillity was incompatible with the strides France was making to universal dominion. The cause

of our allies on the spot, and of those more distant, struggling in Germany, pointed out the propriety of some attempt to create at least a diversion in their favour. It was evident that, could arrangements be made with the Spaniards, the disorganization of Soult's army offered an opportunity for striking a blow at Victor, and perhaps at the Spanish capital, particularly as Sebastiani was supposed to be fully employed in La Mancha. Sir Arthur, in consequence, offered to aid the Spaniards in a forward offensive movement into Spanish Estramadura. Such a step appeared the only means of re-establishing the war in the Peninsula, as the cause of Spain was fast sinking under the superior troops and management of the French, who, however they might dread the population, had learned that the armies were incapable of opposing their progress*. Much precious time was wasted in the arrangements for the necessary co-operation of the two armies, which, but for the pride and obstinacy of Cuesta, might have been more usefully employed. It was only after conside-

* The Author of the "Voyage en Espagne et Lettres Philosophiques," says at this time, "Les Espagnols ne pouvaient plus rien par eux-mêmes: ils n'avaient à opposer que des partis mal armés, mal équipés, mal aguerris, et plus mal commandés encore."

rable *negotiation*, (an expression perfectly applicable to the intercourse between ourselves and our allies, though we had only in view the saving their country,) that it was determined to make a simultaneous advance into Spanish Estramadura.

In the meanwhile, Victor, who had retreated from the Guadiana, and withdrawn his army across the Tagus, was evidently falling back to receive aid from Madrid and La Mancha. The plan for this forward movement, was the advance of both armies along each bank of the Tagus, and a junction of the allies in front of the enemy in the plains of Estramadura. The British were to march to the north of the river by Coria and Placentia, turning Almaraz and the enemy's posts facing Cuesta, while the others were to cross at Almaraz, and to co-operate with our advancing columns. It was necessary to secure the frontier of Portugal to the north and north-east, and the passes along the frontier of that country leading from Castille and Leon, as two *corps d'armée*, besides that of Soult, were in the north of Spain.

Marshal Beresford, posted near Almcida, was to undertake the first with the Portuguese army, while Cuesta promised to occupy the Banos pass, leading direct from Salananca upon Placentia. The Spaniards engaged to find means of collect-

ing and furnishing us with provisions. On the 27th June, head-quarters left Abrantes for Villa del Rey; on the 28th, they reached Cortesada; the 29th, Sarzedas, and Castello Branco on the following day, and halted the 1st of July. They continued their march on the 2nd to Zohreira; and the 3rd, passed the frontier to Zarza Mayor, where they crossed upon the route of the captured Gen. Franceschi, who, after reaching Spain with Soult's army, had been taken in Leon, and was being carried to Seville, fated to die incarcerated within the walls of Grenada. He was a distinguished officer of light cavalry, and had been opposed to us not only six weeks before on the Vonga, but the like number of months antecedently on the plain of Leon. He was dressed in a Hussar's uniform, and decorated with a star, bearing an emblem similar to the arms of the Isle of Man, three legs diverging from a common centre.

The army was here joined by the Lusitanian legion under Sir R. Wilson, and after halting on the 4th, reached Coria on the 5th, Galestad on the 7th, and Placentia on the 8th. The approach to this city drew forth the admiration of all. The bishop's palace and cathedral tower above the houses, which rise from a bed of verdure, bordered by the river, while the whole is backed with the most splendid mountains, with silver tops

of perpetual snow. The river above this city is divided into two branches, which form an island, covered with the finest trees.

The several reinforcements received antecedently to, and during our short stay at Placentia, rendered necessary a new distribution of the regiments and brigades. The cavalry were divided into three brigades; the first, of the 14th and 16th light dragoons, under Sir Stapleton Cotton; the second, commanded by Gen. Fane, consisted of the 3d dragoon guards and 4th dragoons; and the third, of the first German hussars, and 23d light dragoons, led by Gen. Anson.

The infantry was divided into four divisions:—

1st. DIVISION.—LIEUT.-GEN. SHERBROOKE.

BRIG.-GEN. H. CAMPBELL, Guards and 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regiment.

BRIG.-GEN. CAMERON, 61st, 83d. Regiments, 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th. Regiment.

BRIG.-GEN. LANGWORTH, 2 Batt. King's German Legion.

BRIG.-GEN. LOWE, 2 Batt. King's German Legion.

2d. DIVISION.—MAJOR-GEN. HILL.

BRIG.-GEN. STEWART, 29th, 48th Regiments, 1 Batt. Detachment.

MAJ.-GEN. TILSON, Buffs. 48th, 66th. Regiments.

3d. DIVISION.—MAJOR-GEN. M'KENZIE.

1st. Brigade, 24th, 31st, 45th. Regiments.

COL. DONKIN'S Brigade, 5 Comps. 5 Batt. 60th Regt. and 87th 88th Regts.

4th DIVISION.—BRIG.-GEN. A. CAMPBELL.

1st Brigade, 7th, 53d, Regiments, 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regiment.

2nd Brigade, 2 Batt. Detachment, 97th Regt. 1 Comp. 5 Batt. 60th Regiment.

To these was to be added the Lusitanian legion under Sir R. Wilson, being the only Portuguese troops employed in this operation.

This distribution into divisions was the first step to the gradual growth of these corps into little armies, complete in themselves like the Roman legions, being, (with the sole exception of cavalry,) about their strength. The light companies of the regiments composing them were formed into a battalion, which under some intelligent officer, ever marched at the head, and to which was added a company or more of the deadly riflemen of the foreign corps, the 60th. These were the Velites, while the battalions were all worthy to be considered as *Triarii* or *Principes*. They had subsequently artillery, spare ammunition, and engineer, medical, and commissariat staff attached to them; and when each was increased in 1810, by a Portuguese brigade, consisting of a battalion of light infantry, and two line battalions, they became in themselves superior in numbers to some of the petty expeditions in which England has often placed her

hope, while they have only wasted her strength. Our whole force of British did not consist of 18,000 men, principally of men raised by the voluntary enrolment of the militia.

We learned at Placentia, that the French occupied Talavera de la Reyna, and were supposed to be waiting for reinforcements from Madrid and La Mancha. During the concentration of the army at Placentia, Sir Arthur had his first personal communication with Cuesta at Casa del Puertos. His Excellency passed in review the Spanish army, and definitively settled the plan of the campaign.

The British army was to cross the Tcitar, and direct its march upon Oropesa, where it was to form a junction with the Spanish army from Almaraz, and to advance on Talavera de la Reyna. The cavalry of the Spaniards under the Duke of Albuquerque, and the division of infantry commanded by Ballasteros, were to continue and move on the left bank of the Tagus, and cross that river at the Puente del Arzobispo.

To diminish and separate the enemy's force, and distract their attention, General Vanegas from La Mancha was to threaten Aranjuez, while Sir R. Wilson, who was already on the Tcitar, was to have, besides his own corps, some few

Spanish troops, and to act upon their other flank, and by pushing to and beyond Escalona, make them uneasy respecting the capital.

Sir Arthur, after having halted eight days at Placentia, moved on the 17th to Talaquela; on the 18th to Majedas, and on the following day to Casa de Centinela, across vast plains, occasionally covered with forests of cork trees. These quarters of the 19th, as the name indicates, consisted of a single house, which offered such miserable accommodation, that Sir Arthur, as well as the rest of the staff, preferred sleeping in wigwams, made with boughs of trees. On the 20th, while the army pushed on to Oropesa, the heat and the want of water were so great, that the troops suffered exceedingly, and several men sank under exhaustion. Here we became an allied army, forming a junction with the Spaniards, from whom we hoped, however we might doubt, to receive support and assistance. But the first view of the infantry considerably damped our expectations, though we were assured their cavalry, moving across at Arzobispo, were to appear (for we had not forgotten their conduct at Medellín) the best of the army. On further acquaintance, however, our conclusions respecting even this part of the army were not more favourable than that we had formed of their sister

arm the first day we joined them ; as they wanted in spirit and conduct, what the foot soldiers required in appointments and organization.

The army of Spain, before the breaking out of the Revolution, though not so degraded as that of Portugal, had been long declining. Although the army intended for the coast of Barbary, assembled under Gen. Count O'Reilley, as late as 1788, was in an efficient state, it had greatly altered for the worse within the last twenty years. Instead of keeping pace with the rest of Europe in improvements in the art of war, Spain had considerably retrograded ; and while the two last years had shaken to pieces the old establishment, the officers educated under it were incapable of forming a new army.

Although the men were the same as those who, three centuries before, had raised the Spanish name to the height of celebrity it so well deserved and so long maintained, they were no longer led by a chivalrous nobility and gentry. The officers taken from these classes in the beginning of the 19th century, evinced in their character the debasing state of the Court and Government.

In July, 1809, it was but the remnant of an organized army, and even this was only evinced (except in a few regiments) in the appellation of the corps known to be of long standing. A por-

tion of the garde-du-corps accompanied this army; the sole remains of the court establishment of the past Bourbons, whether of France or Spain. It had been created by Philip V on taking possession of the throne of Spain at the beginning of the last century, and consisted entirely of officers. Those with Cuesta bore cartridge belts of green leather and silver. Some of the heavy cavalry looked respectable, particularly the regimento del Rey, the first of dragoons, which, commanded by a relation of Cuesta, would have passed muster in any army.

The carabineers, a part of the royal guard, and who bore a better character for conduct in the field than the other regiments of cavalry, were efficient both in men and horse, as well as in appointments.

A brigade of two regiments of heavy dragoons, one of which was the regiment of Saguntum, attracted the attention of the British officers, from being dressed in yellow with cocked-hats, and they looked better than would be supposed from so singular a costume.

Their light cavalry consisted of Hussars (*Usares*) and Chasseurs, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow. Little judgment seemed to have been employed in proportioning the size of the horse to the light or heavy cavalry, though

it must be allowed the Spanish horses offer little choice, being universally slight, and not so well adapted for the shock of a charge as for an Eastern irregular kind of warfare.

The Spanish cavalry had a means of turning their jackets and sleeved waistcoats into a stable dress, by the sleeves, taking off at the shoulders, being only laced on with a differently coloured cord from that of the coat; thus, besides being useful, having a good appearance. Their mode of riding was new to the English; the stirrup leathers were so long, that they could only touch them with their toe; while the carbine, hanging perpendicularly along the valise, was equally novel. Boots were far from universal, and many had in their stead a kind of leather legging, stiff-fitting, buttoned tight to the limbs, and formed like a gaiter, coming over the shoe. Many horsemen, however, were devoid of covering for the legs or feet, and the naked toe was seen peeping through a sandal, touching the stirrup. Of the infantry, the Walloon Guards, (consisting principally of foreigners,) and the Irish brigade, were in the best order. The first, in two or more battalions, were dressed in dark blue, and broad white lace; while the uniforms of the latter were light blue. These consisted of the regiments of Yrlanda, Ultonia, and Hibernia, being the re-

mains of the Irish Catholic regiments. At this time, although they had no privates, there were still among them some few officers of that nation. The white Bourbon uniform had entirely disappeared, and circumstances and economy had changed the colour of the principal part of the infantry into a deep chocolate.

But several battalions were, with the exception of the British arms, little better in appearance than peasantry; and though the major part of them had chaccos, many could only boast a kind of sandal instead of shoes, and in lieu of cross, waist-belts, from which hung tubes like the ancient *Bandelet*, lined with tin, each containing a cartridge. Few had great coats; the generality having blankets, (with a hole in the middle for the head to pass through,) hanging loose about their person.

Their artillery was good, from attention having been given to it before the breaking out of the war, but the train was unlike any other in modern armies, the guns and ammunition-waggons being drawn by mules, not two abreast, but in teams like cart-horses, without reins, and under no farther command than the voice of their conductors, who ran on foot on the side of the road. Their guns were heavy, and among the field batteries were several of twelve-pounders.

Their *matériel* for provisions, stores, and bag-

gage was perfectly inadequate to their army, and ill adapted for their country. Instead of a large proportion of sumpter mules, they were accompanied by a vast train of tilted two wheeled carts, carrying little, and with long teams of mules, lengthening to inconvenience the line of march.

The whole army was said to consist of 7000 cavalry and 31,000 infantry.

But we should not have been dissatisfied with our allies, *malgré* their appearance, or even their rags, had we felt any reason to confide in them. The men were evidently capable of "all that man dare," but the appearance of their officers at once bespoke their not being fit to lead them to the attempt. These not only did not look like soldiers, but not even like gentlemen; and it was difficult, from their mean and abject appearance, particularly among the infantry, to guess from what class of society they could have been taken. Few troops will behave well if those to whom they ought to look up are undeserving respect; and on this principle we might, at Oropesa, have predicted coming events, as far as the conduct of the Spanish soldiers was concerned. But besides their general inefficiency, we found their moral feeling different from what we expected. The preceding two years had made a great alteration in the feeling of the nation;

the burst of enthusiasm was but momentary, and being only fed by accidental victory, soon subsided on a reverse of fortune. Far from their army evincing devotion, or even the most common courage in their country's cause, they were more often guilty, individually and collectively, of the most disgraceful cowardice.

The inefficiency of the officers spread to the staff, and we hourly regretted that the revolution had not occasioned a more complete *bouleversement*, so as to bring forward fresh and vigorous talents from all classes. The proof that this opinion was just, was evinced by none of the regular military showing themselves worthy of command. Indeed, with the exception of a few self-made soldiers among the Guerillas, who had risen from among the farmers and peasantry, it would be difficult to point out during the whole war any officer, whose opinion, even in his own department, or on the most trivial military subject, was worthy of being asked.

The Cortes ruling for Ferdinand, and continuing the old system, formed one of the causes of the want of success of the Spaniards. They had to meet youthful Generals and the fresh energies of France with all the improvements of modern warfare, by old besotted and prejudiced Generals, whose armies were formed of obsolete principles,

while the system of an *ancien régime* of a decrepit Government continued to cramp every step to improvement. To these were added that blind pride and self-vanity, which made them still consider themselves what history and tradition had represented their forefathers and nation. No proofs of inferiority would open their eyes, and without reflection or consideration they rushed from one error and misfortune into others, benefiting by no experience, and disdaining to seek aid or improvement from those capable of restoring them to efficiency.

Had they placed their armies at our disposal, and allowed the introduction of the active and intelligent British officers into command, their regular army might have become as celebrated in after-ages for the defence of the Peninsula, as the Portuguese or their own Guerillas; while at present, with the exception of their irregular warfare and defence of cities, their military character, during a period so brilliant for their allies, both Portuguese and British, appears absolutely contemptible. The army which we joined at Oropesa, in addition to its other drawbacks, was headed by a general as decrepit in mind as body. To abilities not superior to the most common intellect he united the greatest fault in a commander of an army, that of indecision, while every

act bespoke his suspicion and jealousy of his allies and their commander.

Attached to this army was an example, in the person of Lord Macduff, of one of those gallant spirits, who occasionally shaking off the idolence of wealth, volunteer to aid some soul-stirring cause. His Lordship had the rank of a Spanish Colonel.

On the 21st, the two Commanders-in-Chief dined together, and in return for the military spectacle Cuesta had given to Sir Arthur at Casa de Puertos, when he visited him from Placentia, the British troops, with the exception of Gen. M'Kenzie's division on the advance, were drawn out in the evening for his inspection. The mounting on horseback to proceed to the review, showed how ill-fitted was Cuesta for the activity of war. He was lifted on his horse by two grenadiers, while one of his aide-de-camps was ready on the other side to conduct his right leg over the horse's croup, and place it in the stirrup! Remarks were whispered at this moment, that if his mental energy and activity did not compensate for his bodily infirmity, Sir Arthur would find him but an incapable coadjutor. The Spanish General passed along the line from left to right, just as the night fell, and we saw him put com-

fortably into an antiquated square-cornered coach, drawn by nine mules, to proceed to his quarters.

On the morning of the 22d, we came in sight of the town of Talavera de la Reyna, which has since become so celebrated in English history. The town, seen about three miles distant, was embosomed in trees and inclosures, while the scarped hills on the right marked the course of the Tagus. The inclosures ended about a mile to the left of the town, joining some low, open, undulating hills, which stretched to some valleys and higher ridges. This open country communicated with an extensive plain in front of the town, across which passed the road from Oropesa, being gradually lost as it approached Talavera in the vineyards and woods. In the midst of this plain were posted about 800 or 1000 French cavalry, who, with the utmost indifference, were dismounted, feeling assured that a few skirmishers would check the advance of the Spanish cavalry in their front. These, under the Duke d'Albuquerque, had crossed the Tagus at the Puente del Arzobispo, and had arrived early opposite the French advance. Instead of being anxious to show their Allies their activity when at so little cost, being five or six times more numerous than the enemy, they made no attempt

to drive them in, but contented themselves with deploying into several long lines, making a very formidable appearance. With feelings of astonishment we rode on to the skirmishers, who consisted of mounted Guerillas, dressed like the farmers of the country. We expected to see them closely and successfully engaged, having heard they were peculiarly adapted for petty warfare; but we found them utterly incapable of coping with the enemy's *tirailleurs*, who were driving them almost into a circle. They were so careless and inexpert in the use of their arms, that one of them nearly shot, by accident, an English officer near him.

The Spaniards (from the commencement) thus continued skirmishing for four hours,* until Gen. Anson's brigade arrived, which they allowed at once, and as a matter of course, without any reference or notice, to pass through the intervals of their squadrons; at the same time these heroes notified their own want of efficiency and spirit, by acknowledging and paying tribute to both in their allies, by a profusion of *vivas*!

* In the Author's original copy of his Journal, written a few days after, he finds the conduct of the Spaniards on this occasion thus noticed:—"and it is my belief they would have continued till now, if we had not aided them."

On our advancing, the French drew off to the left of the town along the open ground, skirting the inclosures, and exchanging shots with our skirmishers. The Spaniards kept to the right along the great road, and could scarcely be brought by the intercession of British officers to enter the town, from whence they learned a body of 4 or 500 infantry had just retired. Brig. General Charles Stewart, who happened to be on the spot, persuaded their officers to follow their retreat along the fine Madrid road, which was one hundred and fifty yards wide. The enemy were overtaken retiring in two small columns, and to the attack of one General Stewart led the Spanish cavalry. The result, as indeed all we saw on this day of our allies, was a proof of their total want, not only of discipline, but of courage. On this and two succeeding attempts, (to which the English general headed them), on receiving the enemy's fire, when the principal danger was past, they pulled up and fled in every direction; yet in Cuesta's account of this affair, he called it an "*intrepid charge.*"

Cruelty and cowardice are ever combined, and these same Spaniards who had thus avoided closing with the unmaimed enemy, murdered in cold blood a few wounded and dying men their column left in the road when they retired, who

were struck down by the artillery which was brought up after the cavalry's repulse. Their barbarity was even heightened by accompanying each stab with invectives and comments on their victims' never again seeing their homes or Paris. On the left the enemy retired before our cavalry, about four miles beyond the town. Anson's brigade made an attempt to charge about 1,500 of their cavalry, but they were found unassailable, having taken post beyond the bed of the Albereche, which, running for about two miles at right angles with the Tagus, empties itself into that river. The enemy allowed them to come close, and then opened a fire of four guns and two howitzers, which occasioned some small loss before they could withdraw out of fire. One of the horses of this brigade, the bip and leg of which was carried off, and its entrails trailing on the ground; recovered itself on three legs, and tried to take its place again in squadron.

The enemy had tirailleurs in the underwood near the river, and were very jealous of its banks, opening a fire of artillery on all who showed themselves. Sir Arthur and head-quarter staff came unexpectedly in the afternoon under a fire of some light guns on the right in front of the Spaniards, and one of several four-pound shots whizzed close over the General's head. The

troops were ordered to bivouack in the neighbourhood of Talavera, and General M'Kenzie's division was pushed on to the front in the neighbourhood of an old ruined building, at the angle of the Alberche, where it turned east. It was evident that the enemy were in force on the opposite side of the river; and a ridge of hills, above 800 yards from the bank, sloping towards it, offered them a very suitable defensive position. Its left rested on the Tagus, and its right was secured by the turning of the Alberche, and some difficult wooded ridges beyond. Their strength could not exceed 23,000 men, being the troops which had fallen back from the south of the Tagus, not having been joined by any troops from Madrid or Aranjuez.

We fully expected a battle on the following day, and about twelve o'clock on the 23rd, the first and third division got under arms, and advanced in the direction of the enemy's right, while the rest of the army were ready to move at a moment's notice; but, unfortunately, Sir Arthur had to overcome the wavering conduct of his confederate General, who appeared quite unaware of the use of time or opportunity in military operations. He could not be brought so to decide on attack, that Sir Arthur could feel secure of the Spaniards making a simultaneous attack with his

army, or that the British might not be left to gain the day alone. The bivouack of Cuesta was on the road to Madrid, about three-quarters of a mile from the Alberche, where, on the cushions taken out of his carriage, he sat, the picture of mental and physical inability.

Two soldiers stood near to aid or support him in any little necessary operation, and the scene would have been ridiculous had it not been painful, as we saw the tide, which, "when taken at its flood," might, nay, would "lead us on to fortune" and victory, fast ebbing, without our taking advantage of it. After considerable suspense, it was universally reported throughout the army, that on being pressed and driven to his last excuse, Cuesta pleaded that it was Sunday, at the same time promising to attack at daylight the next morning; and our troops were in consequence ordered back to their bivouacks. It may be fairly considered that pride had considerable weight on this occasion. Cuesta was a true Spaniard, and disliked the suggestion of an English general in his own country, and, with recollections of two hundred and fifty years before, could not bring his ideas down to present changes and circumstances. These feelings were national, and ever evinced, and it was only very late in the war, after the Spaniards found they

had not an officer to lead their armies, and they despaired of finding one, that they consented to place Sir Arthur at their head. Sir Arthur deserves as much credit for keeping his temper during his six years' intercourse with the Spanish Government and officers, as for the general conduct of the war. When we reflect on promises broken and engagements violated, involving the safety of his army, the honour of his character, and his credit as an officer, and yet know of no quarrel that extended (if any existed) beyond correspondence or negotiation, future ages are bound to give our Commander credit for unbounded placidity of temperment.

Though sorely annoyed by this determination, the officers could not let pass without ridicule the incongruity we had observed within the last three days in the old gentleman's proceedings. It was impossible not to notice the Spanish General going out to battle, to within half a mile of the advanced-posts, in a carriage drawn by nine mules, and the precautions to preserve him from the rheumatism, like those taken by delicate ladies, in our humid climate, at a *fête champêtre*, in placing the carriage cushions on the grass. To these the Spanish Commander-in-Chief was supported by two grenadiers, who let him drop on them, as his knees were too feeble to

attempt reclining without the chance, nay certainty, of a fall. Yet this was the man to whom the Cortes had entrusted their armies, but who ought (if he did not himself feel his own inability), to have been removed without a moment's delay after the first trial. They had only one excuse; the year before had made common honesty a virtue, and they forgot every other requisite, in a desire to avoid treachery.

We began, however, to have some hope on the evening of the 23rd, when orders were delivered out for attack the next morning at daylight. General Sherbrooke was to move at two in the morning, while the remainder of the army was to rendez-vous in rear of the third division, at the angle of the Alberche. The British column of attack, with the third division at its head, supported by General Anson's brigade, and followed by the first, second, and fourth divisions, was to attack the enemy's right, the Spaniards were to force the troops on the heights crossed by the road to Madrid, while the remainder of the British and the whole of the Spanish cavalry were to cross the river on the open ground in the enemy's front. No drums or trumpets were to sound. The columns for attack were formed before daybreak on the 24th,

and the left column, which was to cross the river and ascend the heights round the enemy's right and opposite the village of Casaleguas, was already on its march, when it was discovered the enemy had retired during the night.

While this event proved the effect of procrastination in warfare, it was to be deeply lamented on every account. The enemy, the day before, not consisting of above 22,000 men, had most imprudently offered us battle before the reinforcements from Madrid or la Mancha had reached him, and, if he had been attacked, must have been annihilated. We had near 18,000 British and 36,000 Spaniards, of whom 10,000 were horse, and, the position once forced, they would have had to retire across an open plain of many leagues, pursued by a victorious enemy and a superior cavalry.

Colonel Delancey had gained and continued in the rear of the enemy all night, and joined us at daylight with a French officer he had taken. We entered their variously-hutted camps across the river, which we found arranged with comfort and taste. Their army, on arriving from the line of the Tagus, had found the ripe wheat standing, and, regardless of its value, had not only thatched, but made whole huts, with the corn in the ear,

which, hanging down, shed the grain on the ground as we passed along and between them. They had huilt with boughs of trees an immense *Salle de Spectacle*, and formed, by cutting down and removing the largest olive trees, and sticking their pointed ends into the ground, an avenue, leading up to it, of some length—an act more wanton and reprehensible than that of taking the unthrashed corn, as the fruit of the olive is not produced under several years' growth.

Shy as Cuesta was of coming to blows with the enemy when in his front, he became most anxious for his pursuit when at a distance and in retreat. Without considering that Victor was only falling back on reinforcements, he ordered his army to advance, (as if the French were in full retreat for the Ebro,) and established his posts on the 25th at Torrijos. Had not the English General taken quite a different view of the subject, it would have been most imprudent, if not impossible to advance, as provisions began to fail us. The Spaniards, far from aiding our commissariat, took no precautions whatever to prepare food for 18,000 additional mouths, and our position threatened to be untenable for want of food.

Sir Arthur, in consequence, declined making any forward movement, and contented himself

with pushing two divisions of infantry across the Alberche, and posting them at Casaleguas. In the meanwhile the enemy were concentrating their various corps. The reserve, and the Guards from Madrid left that capital with King Joseph on the 22d at night, and joined the 4th *corps d'armée*, under Sebastiani, at Toledo. These united on the 25th, between Torrijos and Toledo, with the corps under Victor, and formed an army of 45 to 48,000 men, after a garrison of 2,000 had been left in Toledo. This small force was sufficient to cover any advance of the Spaniards from La Mancha, as Vanegas frittered away the time to no purpose, while Madrid was overawed by General Belliard, entrenched in the Retiro.

On the junction of these armies, Cuesta saw too late his mistake in so inconsiderately advancing from the neighbourhood of the British, and before he could withdraw his most advanced corps, became engaged with the enemy. The cavalry Regiment of Villa Viciosa, drawn up in an enclosure surrounded by a deep ditch, with but one means of egress, was hemmed in by the enemy and cut to pieces, without a possibility of escape. A British officer of Engineers saved himself by his English horse taking at a leap the barrier which surrounded the Spaniards, and which their horses were incapable of clearing. The Spa-

niards, on the 26th, fell back towards the Alberche and Talavera, in such confusion that it can only be compared to a flight, while the enemy followed with the evident intention of bringing the Allies to battle.

Every one now felt its approach, and some little preparations were made to strengthen a position which Sir Arthur had selected, resting on Talavera. These consisted in placing some of the Spanish heavy guns in battery on the main road, in front of the Madrid gate, and throwing up some barricades on the different approaches to the town. A breastwork was commenced on a small rising ground in a little plain, at the spot where the flanks of the British and Spanish would unite, about the centre of the Allied army. These were the only attempts at entrenchment, and the last was not completed. All the troops were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice.

On the 27th the British cavalry were ordered to the front, to cover the retreat of the Spaniards and of our own divisions across the Alberche. About mid-day the enemy's army began to show itself, and while our cavalry withdrew to the right bank of the river, in the open ground, the 5th division fell back from Casaleguas, through a woody country, to the same spot, near an old

ruined house, the Casa de Salinas, which they had occupied before the enemy retreated. Before re-crossing the Alberche, they set fire to the old hatted camps of the enemy, the smoke from which rose so thickly as completely to hide from view the country beyond and to the west of the village of Casaleguas. The two brigades of the 5th division lay upon their arms in front of this ruin, the highest part of which overlooked the surrounding trees, offering a view of the country. Sir Arthur dismounted, and, leaving his horse standing below, scrambled with some difficulty up the broken building, to reconnoitre the advancing enemy. Though ever as gallant, we were by no means such good soldiers in those days as succeeding campaigns made us, and sufficient precautions had not been taken to ascertain what was passing within the wood (on the skirt of which the division was posted,) and between it and the ford below Casaleguas.

But the enemy had crossed, under cover of the smoke from the burning huts, a very large force of infantry, and, gradually advancing, opened a fire so suddenly on our troops lying on the ground, that several men were killed without rising from it. This unexpected attack threatened the greatest confusion, little short of dismay, but the steadiness of the troops, particularly the 45th,

prevented disorder, and gave time for Sir Arthur and his staff to withdraw from the house and mount their horses. Sir Arthur's escape, may, however, be considered most providential. The troops were withdrawn from the wood into the plain, but after we had lost many officers and men. As this was the enemy's first attack, and might, by our withdrawing, be considered successful, it was peculiarly unfortunate, from adding to the enemy's confidence in attacking our army. These two brigades, being supported by General Anson's cavalry, gradually fell back towards our army.

The enemy now crowded the heights, extending from Casaleguas to the Tagus, with vast bodies of troops, accompanied with quantities of artillery. These crossed at the various fords on the Albereche, to the plain west of it; while some of their cavalry, in the loosest order, came in crowds through the woods, following our advanced corps as they gradually withdrew to our position, of which, as we approached the chosen ground, the principal features began to show themselves. Their horse artillery soon overtook us in our retreat, and opened a heavy and constant fire, particularly of shells, under which the troops formed on their ground. As the enemy closed on our position, our different divisions were seen hur-

rying to the post assigned them, which formed the left wing of the Allies; and some anxiety was felt for the arrival of the troops who were to defend a towering height, which, it was evident, would be the key of the position.

The men, as they formed and faced the enemy, looked pale, but the officers, riding along their line, only of two deep, on which all our hopes depended, observed they appeared not less cool and tranquil than determined. In the mean while the departing sun showed by his rays the immense masses moving towards us, while the last glimmering of twilight proved their direction to be across our front towards the left, leaving a sensation of anxiety and doubt if they would not be able to attack that point even before our troops, which had not yet arrived, were up. The darkness, only broken in upon by the bursting shells and flashes of the guns, closed quickly upon us, and it was the opinion of many that the enemy would rest till morning. But this was soon placed beyond doubt, by the summit of the height on our left being suddenly covered with fire, and for an instant it was evident the enemy had nearly, if not completely, made a lodgment in our line. This attack was made by three regiments of the division of Ruffin, the 24th, 96th, and 9th, but of which, the enemy say, the last only

reached the summit, the very citadel of our position.

They had marched, without halting, up the rise of the hill, and came upon the German Legion, who had, having been informed they were to the rear of General Hill's division, and believing they were in a second line, lain down on their arms, and when the enemy topped the hill, *en masse*, many were asleep. But General Hill's corps had not arrived, and the Germans were first roused by the enemy seizing them as prisoners, or firing into them at *brûle-pourpoint*. The flashes of the retiring fire of the broken and surprised Germans marked the enemy's success, and the imminent danger of our army. General Sherbrooke, posted in the centre, with the promptitude required in such an emergency, ordered the regiments of the brigade next to the Germans to wheel into open column, and then, facing them about, was preparing to storm the hill, with the rear-rank in front, when the brigade of Gen. Donkin by a brilliant charge restored the height to its proper owner, also driving the French from the top of the hill into the valley, with immense loss, and the colonel of the 9th regiment terribly wounded. A second attack was afterwards repelled by the timely arrival of the division of

Gen. Hill, Colonel Donkin's brigade having taken ground to its right. There was some fear that the enemy, when the Germans had been driven back, had carried off the only heavy guns we had with our army, but fortunately they had been withdrawn at dusk from the brow of the hill. Major Fordice, of the Adj.-Gen. department, an officer of great promise, fell in retaking these heights, with many valuable officers and men.

After this attack was repulsed, the enemy remained quiet, awaiting the morn which was to decide the fate of the battle. The British light infantry was thrown out to the front, with sentries still more advanced towards the enemy. This necessary precaution, coupled with the inexperience of our troops, principally militia-men, produced a heavy loss, from the jealousy they felt of all in their front, after this night attack. This was increased by the constant word "*stand up*" being passed along the line, and on more than one occasion it led to an individual soldier firing at some object in his front, which was taken up by the next, and so passed, like, and to appearance being a running wildfire, down the front of one or more regiments, till stopped by the officers. In this, the troops unfortunately forgot their light infantry in front, and many

brave officers and men fell a sacrifice to the fire of their comrades; amongst them was Colonel Ross of the Guards.

The Spaniards were not less on the alert than ourselves, but their anxiety not only extended to firing musquetry, but to salvos of the cannon placed in front of Talavera. On one occasion this was said to have originated from a cow having got loose and cantered up to their line. Our troops, however, stood firm to their ground, while regiments of the Spaniards, after giving a volley, quitted their position and fled through the gardens and enclosure, bearing down all before them, and were only brought into line again by degrees. One of these alarms about midnight, in front of Talavera, was so great, that a large portion of the troops posted in the front, left their ground, and rushed through the town, and in the midst of the crowd of fugitives was seen a certain square-cornered coach, the nine mules attached to it being urged to the utmost; implying that its inmate was as anxious to escape as the meanest in the army.

Sir Arthur, surrounded by his staff, slept, wrapped in his cloak, on the open ground, in rear of the second line, about the centre of the British army. A hasty doze was occasionally taken, as more continued rest was disturbed by

alarm of different kinds,— while the reflections of others kept them waking. The bustle of the day had prevented a review of our situation, but, on being left to our own thoughts, it was impossible not to reflect on the awfully approaching crisis. We could not but feel that here was to be another trial of the ancient military rivalry of England and France; that the cool, constitutional, persevering courage of the former was again to be pitted against the more artificial, however chivalrous, though not less praiseworthy, bravery of the latter. This view of the relative valour of the two nations cannot be questioned, if we consider that the reminding the British of this moral quality is wholly unnecessary, and instead of language of excitement being constantly applied to our soldiery, that of control, obedience, and composure is solely recommended; while our ancient opponents are obliged incessantly to drive into the ears of their men, that they are nationally and individually the bravest of the human race. Hearing nothing else so flattering to their unbounded vanity, they become so puffed up by this eternal stimulant, as to be fully convinced of its truth, which, in consequence, makes their first attack tremendous.

Buonaparte, being aware of this weak point in their character, fed it in every way, and the ob-

ject of wearing a paltry piece of enamel gained him many battles. But this sort of created courage is not capable of standing a severe test, and the French have always been in their military character more Gauls than Franks; and what Cæsar said of the former eighteen centuries ago, is still applicable to the races now occupying their fine country. If stoutly opposed at first, this kind of courage not only diminishes but evaporates, and has, does, and will, ever fail before that of the British. As soldiers, taking the expression in its widest sense, they are equal, if not superior, to us in many points; but on one, that of individual constitutional courage, we rise far superior to them. It is remarkable how often they evince a knowledge of this, and in nothing more than their subterfuges of all kinds to keep it from resting on their minds. All France, aware of this inferiority, by all species of casuistry attempts to conceal it; and in order not to shock their national vanity, they blame every unsuccessful officer opposed to us, even should his dispositions be ever so good, and such as might, but for the courage of our men, have succeeded.

Buonaparte's conduct, after Vittoria, was directed to work on this feeling, and, by sacrificing the officers to the self-vanity of the troops, established for a time the *moral* of the army, by

making those who had fled like sheep at Vittoria, fight us again, though unsuccessfully, with renewed spirit. Besides the bravery of the two nations, no less was the plain of Talavera to try the merit of two systems, and prove the value of different means and education in forming a powerful and efficient military. It was not only to be shown if a chivalrous enthusiasm, and a confidence founded on vanity was to overcome natural and patriotic courage, but if a sense of duty, inculcated by a real discipline, was to sink under feelings created by an absence of control and a long train of excess and military license. It was whether an organized army, worthy of a civilized period, and state of warfare, should not overcome a military cast grown up in the heart of Europe, (from the peculiarity of the times and circumstances,) little better than the Bandits led by Bourbon to the walls of Rome in the sixteenth century. The system on which the French armies were formed was so demoralizing and pernicious in its effects, that the army of Buonaparte ought not to be considered as the national force of France, but that of a conqueror, like Ghenghis Khan, or Tamerlane, of a more civilized age and quarter of the world. Like those scourges, the ruler of the French existed by upholding that soldiery the times

had first created, and which his ambition subsequently fostered, and, in perpetuating their attachment to his person by leading them to victory and plunder; in consequence, robbery was not only overlooked but permitted, and an economist of the French army has since dared in print to excuse its atrocities. This, it is true, is written by one of the revolutionary school, but it will be, (as long as the work is read,) a perpetual disgrace to the army whose acts he records.* All discipline sank under this state of things. Coercion was neither necessary nor prudent, where the views of all were directed to the same lawless objects; and the military code was rather a bond of union and companionship, fostering a spurious glory, or ambition, and a thirst and hope of reward in unshackled military license and execution, than a collection of laws respecting the rights and claims of human nature.

The quickness and intelligence of the French soldiery pointed out the necessity of an obedience to their officers, whom they considered as leading them to objects equally desirable to all; and thus actuated, far from having to re-

* It is needless to say, this alludes to Foy's Introduction to the War of the Peninsula.

ceive orders, they readily anticipated them. A Bedouin robber does not require the positive commands of his chief to do his utmost to destroy the guards, or to plunder the camels of a caravan; and no more did the French, with gain or impure military fame in view, require farther stimulus or direction.

But these various causes so suited the French, that they had the effect, since the Revolution, of raising their armies to the summit of fame, while their successes over the continental troops had made them universally dreaded. They felt this, which increased their confidence; and the army before us, sleeping on the opposite side of the ravine, was strongly imbued with this impression, being formed of the fine regiments of the Italian army, who had so often conquered under Buonaparte, and subsequently marched from one victory to another. Neither the corps of Victor nor Sebastiani, nor the guard or reserve under Desolles, from Madrid, had formed parts of the armies defeated by us at Vimiera or Corunna, nor had any recollections of our prowess to shake that good opinion of themselves, in which the principal strength of the French armies consists.

Though no fears could be entertained for the result, dependent on the brave fellows

lying around us, we could not but regret that they were not composed of troops as fine as those who accompanied Sir John Moore.

We could not hide from ourselves that our ranks were filled with young soldiers, being principally the second battalions of those English regiments which had embarked at Corunna, and consisting of draughts from the militia that had never seen an enemy. With the exception of the Guards and a few others, there were more knapsacks with the names of militia regiments upon them, than of numbered regular regiments. Indeed we felt, no contrast could be stronger than that of the two armies. The ideas of England have never run wild on military glory. We more soberly consider our army rather as a necessary evil than an ornament and boast; and as an appeal to brute force and arms is a proof of barbarism, so ought the general diffusion of the former sentiment in a community to be viewed as conclusive evidence of advance to civilization and intelligence; and instead of directing the talents, or drawing forth the best blood of a people to be wasted in the field, a well-wisher to his country ought to desire them to be retained at home for the general advantage. But, however secure in ourselves, we recollected that we formed but one-

third of the Allied army, and that 36,000 men lay in the same line, every action of whom had led us to consider them as more likely to occasion some common reverse than a happy termination to our operations. We were convinced that if attacked, even in their strong and almost impregnable position, it was most likely to be attended by their immediate flight, which would leave the whole of the enemy to direct his efforts upon us single-handed. In addition, a certain degree of coolness had grown up between the two commanders; and Sir Arthur must have felt that the weakness of his ally by his side was not less to be dreaded than the strength of his enemy in his front. The prospect on the eve of the 28th July, 1809, was thus, though far from hopeless, by no means one of encouragement or sanguine expectation.

The rest of all the officers lying around Sir Arthur was hasty and broken, and interrupted by the uneasiness of the horses held at a distance, and the arrival of deserters, a few of whom came over during the night. They generally informed us, that we were to be attacked at day-light, and that the corps that stormed the hill had consisted of 6000 men. Our glances were constantly directed towards the point from whence the sun was to rise for the last time

on many hundreds who were here assembled within a mile around, while Sir Arthur, occasionally asking the hour, showed he looked for daylight with as much anxiety as any of us. Just before day, we quietly mounted our horses and rode slowly towards the height, where we arrived just as the light allowed us to see the opposite side of the ravine beneath us covered with black indistinct masses. Every instant rendered them more visible, and the first rays of the sun showed us Sebastiani's division opposite our centre, Victor's three divisions at our feet, with the reserve, guard, and cavalry extending backward to the wood near the Alberche. Our eyes were, however, principally attracted by an immense solid column opposite but rather to the left of the hill, evidently intended for attack. Its front was already covered with tirailleurs, ready to advance at the word, and who saw before them the dead bodies of their comrades, who had fallen the night before, strewing the ground. The gray of the morning was not broken in upon by a single shot from either side, and we had time to observe our position, (which had not been completely occupied before dark on the preceding eve,) and how the troops were posted.

The distance from the Tagus to the height

on our left, which overlooked a deep valley, bounded beyond by some sharp and rugged hills, was little less than two miles. The right of the Allied army rested on the town of Talavera and the river. About half the ground from our right to a little beyond the centre was flat, and covered with woods and vineyards, but where these ceased, the remainder of the country was open, and gradually rose to the foot of our important conical hill on the left.

A rill ran along the whole front of our line, and in that part of the ground which was open and undulating, it passed through a ravine, the brow of which was taken advantage of in posting our troops. The Spaniards, from being incapable of moving, were posted in heavy columns in the most difficult country, till they joined our right, which was in an open space, though in its front and rear were inclosures. At this point had been commenced a little redoubt, which however remained imperfect, and was the only "*intrenchment*" of those with which the French, in their accounts, as an excuse for their defeat, have so liberally strengthened our line. But as every thing is sacrificed by them to vanity, truth cannot be expected alone to escape.

On the right of the British was posted the

fourth division, under Sir A. Campbell, supported by Sir S. Cotton's brigade of cavalry; on their left commenced the first division, of which the Guards were on the right. The remainder of this division, consisting of Brig.-Gen. Cameron's brigade and the Germans, extended across the most open ground, and joined on the left to the brigade of Colonel Donkin and the second division, clustered round the height for its defence. The other brigade of Gen. M'Kenzie was placed in the second line. The remainder of the cavalry had bivouacked at some distance to the rear, and were not come up. The enemy were employed from daylight in placing opposite our centre thirty pieces of cannon on the opposite side of the ravine, but not a shot was fired on either side, and the whole looked as if the armies had met for a review. But the calm augured the coming storm, and the quiet evinced that all were aware of the great approaching struggle, and that it was useless to throw away a casual fire, or destroy individuals, where salvos alone and the death of thousands could decide the day. When the vast column we had seen in the dusk was considered ready, a single cannon shot from the centre of the enemy's batteries was the signal

for its advance, and for the opening of all their guns. A shower of balls instantly fell on all parts of our position, and the smoke, (the wind being east, and the damp of the morning preventing its rising,) was blown across the ravine, and completely enveloped us in a dense fog. But we had seen the forward movement intended for our dislodgment, and knew, under cover of this cannonade and smoke, it was advancing up the face of the hill. It consisted of a close column of battalions, of the same division of Ruffin which had attacked the night before.

Gen. Hill, with the brigades of Tilson and Stewart, which had already successfully tried their strength with these same troops, was ready to receive them. The Buffs, 48th, and 66th, advanced to the brow of the hill, wheeling round to meet them with their arms ported, ready to rush on the ascending foe as soon as perceived through the intense smoke. They were not long in suspense, and without a moment's hesitation, by a desperate charge and volley, they overthrew, as they topped the hill, the enemy, who fled in the utmost confusion and consternation, followed by our troops, even across the ravine. Here they rallied, and, after an exchange of sharp firing, our regiments were withdrawn

again to their vantage ground. Had the cavalry been present, the victory might have been completed at this early hour, but they had not come in from their bivouack. As the smoke and tumult cleared off, and the troops were seated behind the summit of the hill, we found our loss considerable, and that Gen. Hill had been forced to quit the field from a shot in the head. The dead of the enemy lay in vast numbers on the face of the hill, and had been tall, healthy, fine young men, well-limbed, with good countenances; and as proof of their courage, (the head of their column having reached within a few yards of the top of the hill before being arrested,) the bodies lay close to our ranks. The face of the height was furrowed out into deep ravines by the water rushing down its steep sides during the rains, and the dead and wounded of both nations lay heaped in them.* Musquetry almost ceased after this defeat, but the cannonade continued; our centre and right suffering considerably, though in the other parts of the line, as our shots were plunging, while theirs were directed

* We were occupied after this attack in carrying away our wounded in blankets, by four or five soldiers, and within a short time the number of unfortunate men assembled round our field hospital, a small house and enclosure behind our centre, barely out of cannon shot, proved our heavy loss.

upwards, it was not so deadly. It continued for above an hour after the repulse, and showed us the inferiority of our calibre. All our guns, with the exception of one brigade of heavy, were miserably *light* six pounders, while the French returned our fire with eights and twelves.

As the weather was dreadfully hot, and it was impossible to know how long we should occupy this ground, orders were given to bury the men who had fallen the night before and in the morning attack, lying around the hill interspersed with the living.

The entrenching tools were thus employed, and it was curious to see the soldiers burying their fallen comrades, with the cannon shot falling around, and in the midst of them, leaving it probable that an individual might thus be employed digging his own grave ! Gradually, however, the fire slackened, and at last wholly ceased, and war appeared as much suspended as before daylight and previously to the attack of the morning. The troops on the advance talked together, and the thirsty of both armies met at the bottom of the ravine, and drank from the same stream. There was also a well at the foot of the hill to the left, where the same water was divided among the collected of both nations around its brink.

About nine it was evident that the enemy had no intention of disturbing us for some time, as

their numerous fires proved they were not inclined to fight again on empty stomachs. This was a painful sight to us, who felt acutely for our starving soldiery, who began to experience the most pinching want. All the promises of the Spaniards had ended in nought. They had made no arrangements to act up to their word, and starvation began to stare us in the face. Generally, however, it was borne by our men with philosophy, but one hungry soldier became almost troublesome, and, close to Sir Arthur and his staff, said, "It was very hard that they had nothing to eat," and wished that they might be let to go down and fight, "for when engaged, they forgot their hunger." The poor fellow was, however, at last persuaded to retire. Till about eleven o'clock all remained quiet, but about that hour immense clouds of dust were seen rising above the woods towards the Alberche opposite the centre of the Allied army, implying movements of large bodies of troops. This indicated the preparing for a general assault, and was occasioned by Sebastiani's corps forming a column of attack.* As the enemy's troops approached, the

* It is remarkable how the accounts differ respecting the hour of attack. Sir Arthur says about twelve, another relates mentions two, and Jourdan, in his interesting letter, places it as late as four o'clock.

cannonade was renewed, and our inferiority of metal was so evident, that a brigade of Spanish 12 pounders was borrowed from Cuesta. The fellows attached to these guns showed good spirit, and, posting their guns on the side of the hill, were found most effective. The French, at times, had the most exact range of the height, and threw shot and shells upon it with terrible precision. One shell killed four horses, held by a man, who escaped uninjured. Their fuses, however, often burned too quick, exploding the shells high in the air and forming little clouds of smoke. It was curious that the enemy changed their fire from the troops to our artillery, or from our batteries to our line, whenever we gave them the example.

But the dust drew near in the woods, and a vast column was seen preparing to advance against Sir A. Cameron's brigade in the open ground. General Sherbrooke had cautioned his division to use the bayonet, and when the enemy came within about fifty yards of the Guards, they advanced to meet them, but on their attempting to close the enemy by a charge, they broke and fled. The regiment on their left, the 83rd, made a simultaneous movement, driving the enemy with immense loss before them; but the impetuosity of the Guards led to endangering the day. The

flying enemy led them on till they opened a battery on their flank, which occasioned so heavy a loss, that the ranks could not be formed after the disorder of pursuit, and, on being ordered to resume their ground, produced confusion.

The enemy instantly rallied and followed them, and were so confident of victory, that their officers were heard to exclaim, "*Allons, mes enfans; ils sont tous nos prisonniers.*" But Sir Arthur had foreseen the difficulty in which the Guards were likely to become entangled, and had ordered the 48th from the height to their support. This gallant regiment arrived in the rear of the Guards at the moment when they were retiring in confusion, pressed by the enemy, on the line of position. They allowed the Guards to pass through them, and then, breaking in upon the enemy, gave them a second repulse. The Guards quickly formed in the rear, and moved up into the position; and their spirit and appearance of good humour and determination after having lost in twenty minutes five hundred men, was shown by their giving a hurrah, as they took up their ground; and a report soon after that the enemy's cavalry was coming down upon them, was answered by a contemptuous laugh along their ranks.

The remainder of Sherbrooke's division, after repulsing the enemy, had retired to their former ground in excellent order. The enemy had made an attack at the same time on the fourth division; they accompanied this by a *ruse*, which nothing but the determination of our troops could have overcome. Trusting to the similarity of uniform, they advanced towards the 7th, 97th, and 53d, crying out they were Spaniards, and repeating the Spanish cry of *Vivan los Ingleses!* Though this did not deceive our officers, it did the men, who, under this false impression, could not be brought to fire on them; this allowed their approaching quite close, when they gave their fire so unexpectedly, that it staggered our line, and even caused them to fall back. This was, however, only to exemplify the French proverb, *reculer pour mieux sauter*, as indignation and anger took place of surprise, and a spontaneous rush with the bayonet instantly threw the enemy into utter rout. A Spanish regiment of infantry, on the right flank of the fusileers, broke and fled on this attack; but the King's regiment of horse, with great gallantry, dashed into the wood in co-operation with our troops in pursuit. Several pieces of cannon fell into the hands of Gen. A. Campbell, and three were captured by the

Spanish cavalry, while the flight of the enemy was so rapid, that several others were left in their retreat.

Besides these attacks, the enemy's endeavours and intentions were extended along the whole British line, with the exception of the hill, which they did not again attack after the morning. We had not posted any troops in the valley, or on the hills on our left, the former being commanded, and the latter considered too distant; but it soon became evident that the enemy had turned their views to these points.

The Spanish division of Gen. Basscourt was in consequence borrowed from Cuesta, and sent across the valley to oppose the enemy's light troops on the distant ridge. The French soon after advanced two heavy columns into the valley, consisting of the divisions of Vitelle and Ruffin, and two-thirds of our cavalry were ordered to occupy the valley opposite them. Gen. Anson's brigade arrived first, while the heavy brigade was moving from the rear of the centre to its support. The enemy's two columns advanced, supported by cavalry, threatened to turn our left, and orders, either positive or discretionary, were given to charge them if opportunity offered; these were either interpreted into direct orders, or considered as definitive, under particular circum-

stances, and the 23d regiment soon after advanced in line against one of the columns, the brigade of Laval, which had taken post with its flank against a house. This gallant regiment moved forward with great steadiness, and the squadron, (for the width of only one could embrace the front of the column,) on arriving within firing distance, received a well-directed volley. It seemed to stop them in their career—the whole country was instantly covered with horses galloping back without riders, and men straggling to the rear without horses, while a dense spot seen from the hill marked where the slaughtered lay.

Though this squadron was annihilated, the others dashed on, passed between and round the columns, and fell upon a brigade of cavalry in the rear, broke through them, and rushed on a second brigade beyond. Of these, some cut their way back, while many were slain or taken. Though this desperate charge cost the 23d two-thirds of its men and horses, it had the effect of astounding the enemy, who, seeing not only the 1st German, and the 3d and 4th dragoons prepared for a similar act, but the Spanish cavalry moving into the valley in support, and their efforts unsuccessful elsewhere, not only gave up all farther idea of penetrating in that quarter, but

seemed satisfied that it was imprudent and hopeless any longer to continue the contest. But for being on the defensive, the gaps in our lines, which now forcibly showed themselves, by the regiments not covering one-third of their former ground, would have made us come to the like conclusion; and it was no unpleasing sight to see them begin gradually to draw off their infantry, and bring forward, to cover their retreat, their cavalry, which had been all day in numerous *échelons*, extending back to the woods. They formed several lines, and must have numbered not less than 9 or 10,000 cavalry, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow.

But the views of the British were attracted to a new enemy which had threatened occasionally during the day, and had gained great head soon after the defeat on the right and centre. The ripe corn and dry grass took fire from the cartridges and wadding, and hundreds of acres were rapidly consumed, involving in their conflagrations the more severely wounded and helpless; adding a new and horrid character to the misery of war.

It was so general, that it was a consolation to the friends of officers slain, to learn that their bodies, when found, did not bear the marks of being scorched or burned in their last moments!

But the attention of all was directed till dusk to the enemy's evident preparations for retreat, and during the night they drew off behind the Alberche, which river they had all crossed by the daylight of the 29th; on which morning, Brig.-Gen. R. Craufurd joined the army with 3000 men, and a troop of horse-artillery, and was pushed on to the old ruin, from which Sir Arthur had so narrowly escaped two days before. But these reinforcements, consisting of the 43d, 52d, and 95th, (the beginning of the celebrated light division,) did not make up for the heavy loss we had sustained during the 27th and 28th.

Out of 17,500 men we had lost 5,335, including Generals M'Kenzie and Langworth killed, and Gen. Hill, Sir H. Campbell, and Brig.-Gen. A. Campbell, wounded. This was two-sevenths of our force, and is, with the exception of Albuera, the heaviest list of casualties offered, for the men engaged, of any victorious army in modern war. The loss of the 23d Dragoons was remarkable from its extent; that fine regiment, which had only joined three weeks, being only able to assemble, after the action, one hundred men. Two officers and forty-six men and ninety-five horses were killed on the spot, and besides the numerous wounded, three officers, and about one hundred men were taken, in consequence of

penetrating into the enemy's supporting cavalry. The whole regiment was so reduced, as to be sent home to England, on our return to the Portuguese frontier.

The Spanish returns gave between 1300 and 1400 men, but this included their loss on the 25th in front of St. Ollala*.

The French army fell back across the Alberche, diminished not less than one-fifth, if not one-fourth of their effectives, their loss being indifferently rated from 10 to 14,000 men. Some of the little enclosures in front of the right of the British were choked with their dead, and in one little field more than 400 bodies were counted.

Besides the innumerable dead, vast numbers of wounded were left in our front; and many more stand of arms than the most sanguine rated their loss, were abandoned on the field of battle†. Nineteen pieces of cannon remained in our pos-

* Nous pûmes remarquer à l'occasion de ces deux affaires, le peu de cas que les Espagnols faisaient des Anglais; ils ne les eurent aucun gré des efforts qu'ils firent à Talavera, et croyaient faire éloge de leur armée en disant qu'elle n'avait essuyé presque aucune perte. Les Anglais de leur côté les méprisent souverainement, et sont honteux de les avoir pour Alliés.—*M.S. Journal of a French Officer taken at Batajoz.*

† It was said 17,000 were found.

session as trophies of our victory*. Besides these, they left in our possession several silk standards, but whether they had borne eagles or not it was difficult to say; as, besides being much broken and torn when brought into head-quarters, the staff of one had been used as a poker to a bivouac fire. It was the custom of the French to unscrew their eagles, and for the eagle-bearers to conceal them about their person when in danger. Having only one to a regiment, and there being five battalions to each, every eagle taken by us during the war, may be considered as equivalent to five stand of colours, and the trophies at Whitehall as ten times more numerous than they appear.

It is a remarkable and curious instance of the instability of human institutions, that these idols of the French armies for so many years, and around which so much blood was spilt, only now exist as trophies to their conquerors.

This hard-fought battle was remarkable from the circumstance of almost the entire efforts of an army being directed on the troops of one nation

* A noble Peer, on the vote of thanks to the army, afterwards remarked, that the capture of these guns was no proof of a victory, as, he sagaciously observed, it might have been *convenient* for the enemy to leave them on the field of battle.

of their allied opponents. It is, perhaps, fortunate, that the rancour and vanity of the enemy led them to this conduct, as, had they forced the Spaniards from the difficult country on our right, our army would have been thrown off the Tagus, and had to combat the whole French army, with its communications threatened, if not cut off.

With the exception of occupying the ground, the dash of the regiment of King's cavalry, and the employment of a few battalions in skirmishing on the hills on our left, the Spaniards did nothing whatever*. But their previous behaviour had tended to make us uneasy during the whole battle, and so disgusted was Cuesta with some of his troops, that he ordered several officers and men to be shot for cowardice the next day. This battle gave the character to all the subsequent actions in the Peninsula. They were ever almost entirely of infantry and artillery, while the cavalry, which acted with such effect on the continent, did not assert its power. However brilliant Vimiera and Corunna, still Talavera must be considered as the place where the military character of the two nations was fairly brought to trial and proved. This battle proved

* "Les Espagnols seuls restaient paisibles spectateurs du combat," says a French author.



the total want of firmness of the enemy in meeting our troops with the bayonet, and offered an example, followed by others on every occasion, of their best troops flying like chaff before the wind, on the hostile troops arriving within charging distance.

The French would ever expose themselves to fire at the smallest distance as long as ourselves, but a hurra and a rush with the bayonet, within reach, caused their instant flight.

With the exception of a few desperate men at the rear of a flying column, or from accidental circumstances, scarce any bayonet wounds were exchanged during the whole war; and their dread of closing was so strongly evinced in foggy weather, that a shout was sufficient, as at the pass of Maida in the Pyrenees, to disperse a forming column.

Indeed, our bayonets might as well have been of pasteboard, from their temper being so seldom tried, for the dread of them alone was sufficient to scatter the best troops of France. In fact it is a bad, if not useless weapon in their hands, and the Portuguese heat them with it on more than one occasion.

Brig.-Gen. Alexander Campbell had two horses shot under him, and though wounded through the thigh, continued on his horse till the close of the battle. Sir H. Campbell, who headed the brigade

of Guards, was wounded in the face, the ball entering the cheek and coming out behind the ear. Col. Gordon, of the 83d, was badly wounded in the neck, and when in the act of being removed to the rear, a shell fell into the blanket in which he was carried, and bursting, slew alike the wounded and his bearers. A man of the 87th, while lying down, was shot, the ball entering the head, and was alive five days after.

The incessant and terrible cannonade had created the most shocking wounds, and an unusual portion of wounded were not expected again to join the ranks. The standard of one of the regiments of Guards had three balls in its staff. The prisoners and deserters stated that, during the action, a Westphalian regiment, in the enemy's service, mutinied, but that they were reduced to obedience and marched to the rear.

The morning after the battle was employed in removing our numerous and suffering wounded into the convents and churches, now converted into hospitals. By requisitions of beds and blankets, within three days, principally through the exertion of the head of the medical staff, Dr. Frank, no patient was without a mattress. Nurses and orderlies were selected to attend, and Sir Arthur visited the hospitals himself. The num-

ber of deaths from wounds that proved mortal, obliged immense burial parties to be employed during the first three or four days in removing the bodies from the hospitals. Even in the case of the officers, it was only through the attention of their brother officers, who read the service themselves, that the usual funeral forms were used, while the men were interred without prayers, being generally placed in ditches and the bank dug in upon them.

The heat of the weather rendered as necessary a proper attention to the dead of the enemy, and the Spaniards burned a vast number of the slain; but the weather was too rapid for all exertion, and the tainted air was fraught with every horror, so that the quarters of some of the troops were forced to be changed. Though distressing to relate, it must not be overlooked, that the 29th was disgraced by the atrocious conduct of the Spaniards, in putting to death most of the enemy's wounded left in our front. The amount has been rated as high as one thousand, but it is certain several hundred were thus inhumanly butchered. One of our officers found a French officer badly wounded, and, on offering to seek aid, the poor fellow remarked, that he had no right to expect it, until our own numerous wounded were housed

and dressed. But during the search for assistance, the Spaniards had passed the spot, and he was found stabbed to death!

Sir Arthur felt he could not too soon thank the army which had so nobly aided his efforts, and on the 29th his Excellency issued a long order to that effect, naming distinguished officers and regiments. The enemy continued a rear guard on the Alberche till the night of the 31st July, when they retired through St. Ollala, and our patrols passed through that town: here our officers learned some curious details of the enemies' bearing, under the different feelings of confidence of success and the discouragement of subsequent defeat. In the house where the King had lodged, an instance was given highly creditable to Joseph. A caricature was discovered of El Rey Pepé, which created great indignation in those around Joseph's person, accompanied by threats and ill-treatment. The King, the next morning, on his departure, tendered his host a snuff-box, remarking, that he should be more careful of its contents than of the caricature; on its being opened, it was found to contain the King's miniature.

We were prevented from moving after the enemy, not only on account of our numerous wounded, but from want of provisions. Our dif-

difficulties on this head greatly increased after the battle, and were felt to so great an extent, that the army in part became disorganized, from the ravenous callings for food overpowering all other considerations. While, it was said, comparative plenty reigned in the Spanish camp, our troops were driven to seek and take provisions by force, wherever they could find them; this led to such straggling from the camp, that on the 2d of August the rolls were ordered to be called every two hours. While our position was thus unsatisfactory and even doubtful, news reached head-quarters that our rear was threatened by troops moving down from Castile and Leon. On the 30th a rumour (proved however to be anticipated) spread that the French had arrived in Placentia, and the anxiety became universal.

Our information at this time was less perfect than it afterwards became, and the various reports left the impression that it was Soult's corps alone of 12 to 15,000 men that was thus menacing our communication with Portugal. This however did not make our position untenable, as our army of between 15 and 16,000, was capable of defeating his force, if Cuesta could be persuaded to hold his ground, and keep in check the lately defeated army, and thus cover our hospitals. To this Cuesta agreed, and, ordering Gen. Bassecourt's

division to act as our advance, caused it to march to Oropesa on the 2d. Arrangements were made respecting the hospitals, and Col. M'Kinnon was left in their charge, with but thirty-four medical officers (all we could spare) to attend 5,000 sick and wounded.

We left Talavera on the 3d, under the full expectation of fighting the forces coming from the north, concentrating about Naval Moral. On our arrival at Oropesa on the evening of that day, Bassacourt was pushed on towards that place, and orders were given out implying active and immediate operations, by directing the troops to hold themselves in readiness to march by such orders as they might receive from the Quarter-master-general.

But the course of the night changed all our prospects. Sir Arthur received a despatch from Cuesta stating, that he had received information on which he could depend, that not only had Soult's corps moved from the north, but that it was accompanied by the two other corps, the 5th and 6th, and that he had, in consequence, determined to retire from Talavera. This implied the sacrifice to the enemy of all in our hospitals who had not the power of walking, as the Spaniards, on Col. M'Kinnon applying to them for means of transport, furnished only ten or a dozen carts,

while very many quitted the town empty. Col. M'Kinnon, thus under the painful necessity of leaving nearly 2,300 sick and wounded, gave directions for the rest to withdraw by a nearer road to the bridge of Arzobispo, than through Oropesa.*

This unexpected news added to Sir Arthur's difficulties; and while these were under consideration, they were greatly increased by the whole Spanish army coming in upon us, at daylight on the 4th, with their carts and haggage.

On this occasion the old General had not wanted decision, as was proved by the arrival of himself and army within a few hours after forming his opinion.

The intelligence of Cuesta proved most true; a junction of the three corps had taken place, and the King, before he left Madrid, had sent them orders on the 22d to advance on Placentia. The head-quarters of the 2d, 5th, and 6th corps were at Salamanca on the 27th of July, and directing their march on three succeeding days to the south, forced all the weak passes and posts, and arrived on the 1st of August, at Pla-

* We had the satisfaction of hearing after, that Victor, on entering Talavera, behaved with the greatest attention and kindness to those who, by the chance of war, had thus been left to his mercy and care.

centia, making prisoners 300 sick in the hospitals.

The Spanish troops, retiring before Soult, crossed the Tagus, and fortunately destroyed the bridge of boats at Almarez. But the enemy only thought of intercepting and surrounding the British, and their advance reached Naval Moral on the 3d, but five leagues from Oropesa, thus cutting off the direct road by Almarez to Portugal.

No time was now to be lost, as we were not only likely to be attacked from the west, but, in consequence of the retreat of the Spaniards, threatened with the advance of King Joseph, and his defeated army at Talavera, within three or four days: in which case we should have had, besides 36 to 38,000 from Madrid, 30 to 34,000 from Placentia.

But Sir Arthur soon decided, and gave directions, at four o'clock on the 4th, for all the baggage to proceed across the bridge of Arzobispo. This was preparatory to a similar movement of the army; and having recalled Bassecourt's division, the whole British force filed over to the left bank of the Tagus, where the wounded from Talavera arrived a short time before.

The Spaniards followed to the side of the river, but did not cross that evening. So nearly

had the enemy intercepted our retreat, that at dusk his cavalry interchanged some shots with our advance-posts, close to Arzobispo, and carried off one of our videttes. The Spaniards did not cross the next day; but the British army proceeded down the river, by the same road where the enemy had turned Cuesta's flank before the battle of Medellin, in the preceding spring. This was rendered most necessary, as the occupation of Almaraz could alone secure a retreat upon Portugal; and the pontoons, though removed, had been left but in the charge of some militia. Head-quarters on the 5th were near the village of Peretada de Gabern, and the 3rd division, which had been placed under the orders of General Craufurd, with the addition of his light brigade, was pushed by narrow paths across the mountain, and reached a point within two leagues of the passage over the Tagus.

On the 6th it reached Roman Gourdo, which secured this important position, and head-quarters moved on to Meza de Ibor, (the spot of Cuesta's unsuccessful affair on the 17th of March), and the following day to Deleytoza. It was now possible to halt with security; from the pass at Almaraz being secured; and in a large convent, about a mile from the town, a hospital was formed,

and it was found above 2,000 wounded had accompanied the army.

General A. Campbell had found his way in a huckster's tilted-cart, with a bed made in it, across the most difficult passes in the mountain.

The roads during three days' march were scarcely capable of transport, and the greatest difficulty was experienced in conveying the artillery, while the troops were often halted to cover their retreat.

As we moved over the high ridges, we had a most extensive view across the place we had traversed a fortnight before from Placentia, and saw the glittering of the arms, and the rising dust of the French columns moving on Oropesa.

Colonel Waters and Captain Mellish crossed the river, and reconnoitered the last of these columns, and learned from the peasants, that it was the third of the same size that had passed along that road within the preceding few days; thus fully confirming the information of the three corps having been directed on our rear.

Thus, as in the preceding year, the British had again drawn five *corps d'armée* of the eight in Spain upon them. Some of the troops from the north were not re-equipped after their losses in the north of Portugal, but the three corps had little short of 35,000 effectives. However pre-

cipitate the retreat of Cuesta, it would have been eventually necessary, for, although we could have checked on the 5th, 6th, and 7th, the successive arriving columns of the enemy from Naval Moral, (allowing time for the very desirable transport of many more of our wounded beyond Arzobispo), still our position would sooner or later have become untenable.

It may be conjectured that few armies have witnessed such vicissitudes as the French and English armies within the short period of eleven months. The two armies had more than once advanced and retired in the face of each other. Many of those we saw marching across the plain with the sanguine hope of intercepting our retreat, had been driven from Portugal and carried to France, had witnessed our embarkation from Corunna, and had since been expelled from the Tras os Montes, and now again were compelling us, by an immense superiority of numbers, again to retrograde.

After leaving the Spaniards at Arzobispo, the two armies were totally disunited, and little or no subsequent communication took place between them. We had seen enough of both officers and men to despise and distrust them, from their chief to the drummer, and to hope that we might never again be in the same camp. They not

only were incapable of acting as a military auxiliary, but were wholly remiss in fulfilling their promises, and instead of attempting to find us in provisions, while plenty reigned in their camp, even our officers were destitute of bread. While our troops were on one occasion four days without this indispensable necessary, they had the shameless impudence to sell loaves to our starving soldiers at an immoderate price. So pressing were our wants, that one of our commissaries took from them by force one hundred bullocks and one hundred mule loads of bread. But if their conduct before us had been despicable, it no less at a distance deserved reprehension. Vanegas, who was to have made a powerful diversion from La Mancha on Toledo, completely failed, even to the extent of alarming the enemy, who felt satisfied that 2,000 men in that city were sufficient to keep in check his whole force, while the passes along the Portuguese and Spanish frontier were gained almost without a struggle.

But disasters quickly followed the Spaniards after our separation. On the 6th they crossed to the left bank of the Tagus, and on the following day Cuesta retired with his main force, leaving two divisions of infantry, and the cavalry with the artillery in battery to defend the bridge. The enemy showed themselves on the 6th on the

opposite bank, and increased in number on the 7th, but the interposition of the river between them made the Spaniards consider themselves in perfect safety. On the 8th, the French brought up the artillery, and opened a fire on some redoubts constructed by the Spaniards, while they made preparations for crossing the river. The Spanish cavalry, devoid of all caution, were out in watering order, when 2,000 cavalry dashed into the river, above the bridge, at a good ford, and attacked the redoubts in the rear, at once enveloping the Spanish camp in confusion, dismay, and rout. They fled, some in the direction of Messa de Ibor, others to the southward, leaving their baggage and guns in the hands of the enemy. Those who fled on the former road abandoned guns and ammunition-waggons several leagues beyond the point of pursuit; and Colonel Waters, sent from our headquarters with a flag of truce, finding them thus safe, persuaded the Spaniards, with difficulty, to return and bring back their deserted guns.

This disgraceful affair was the climax of disasters to this army. It could not assemble in a few days subsequently 18,000 men, and the Duke of Albuquerque (against whose advice the Spanish cavalry had been left unprepared), quitted it in disgust, sending in charges to the Cortes against

his commander. This was anticipated by Cuesta, who, on the plea of his health, resigned on the 13th the command of the army. To complete the sad picture presented by the Spaniards, Vanegas, without answering any purpose, just so committed himself on the Toledo side, that Sebastiani fell upon him at Almonacaio on the 10th, and routed him with considerable loss.

Want of forage and provisions continued to an alarming degree in the mountainous tract around Deleytosa and Almaraz, and, still keeping the advance at the latter place, rendered necessary the armies' moving more to the westward. Head-quarters were on the 11th at Jarecejo, in order to be nearer Truxillo, where a large depôt was forming. Sir Arthur ordered, with justice, that the stoppage for the troops usually of six-pence a-day for their provisions, should be only three-pence from the 27th of July till further orders, in reference to their want of regular supplies.* While the head-quarters were at this place, the effects of want of food began to show themselves on the troops, by sickness breaking out, though

* It was not till the 12th of August that rations of spirits were delivered to the troops, and only on the 2nd September, that the regular delivery of provision, allowed the stoppage of sixpence per day.

not at first to the alarming extent it did a month after on the Guadiana.

But the road by Castel Branco to Lisbon was only covered by a small force of four British regiments, which had been moving up under General C. Craufurd, and it became necessary to place the army nearer to Portugal, in a position to cover both banks of the Tagus, should the enemy direct his march from Placentia. Although Craufurd was soon joined by Marshal Beresford from the north, the army moved on the 20th from Jarecejo to Truxillo, and gradually withdrew towards the frontier, head-quarters passing through Majadas, Medellin, Merida, to Badajoz, where Sir Arthur established himself on the 3rd of September with the troops cantoned as follows :—

First Division at	{ Badajos, Arroyo, Lobone, Almendralejo, Talavera la Real, and Santa Marta.
Second Division	{ Modtjo, La Mata, La Puebla de la Calsada, Gorravilla, and Torre Major.
Third Division	{ Campo Mayor. Villa de Rey.
Fourth Division	{ Olivenza. Badajos.

In the mean time the enemy had not followed the defeated Spaniards, but, fearful of leaving the north of Spain without troops, as early as they

had separated the two armies, and felt secure of the capital, the three corps set out on their return, on the 9th, towards Salamanca. Sir R. Wilson, whose advance to Escalona had not produced the supposed effect on the French army, or at Madrid, in retiring from his exposed situation, took post in the pass of Baños. This was the direct road for the enemies returning columns, who, after a sharp affair on the 12th, forced the position, and continued their route, leaving Sir Robert to fall back on the frontier of Portugal.

Thus ended the campaign of 1809, which was not less brilliant than interesting, and tended greatly to the ultimate deliverance of Spain and Europe. Though no immediate results were produced from it, there can be no doubt it saved Andalusia for a time, which province would never have fallen into the enemy's power, had not the besotted Spaniards sought opportunities for defeat, and committed themselves, as at Ocana. In drawing the three corps from the north, it showed all that part of Spain that the struggle was continued with firmness in other quarters; and the very fact of relieving the country from the pressure of the enemy, allowed breathing time, and proved their stay might not be permanent.

The battle of the 27th and 28th July broke

much the enemy's confidence when opposed to us; and their repulse not only gave spirits to the Spaniards, but opened the eyes of Europe to the possibility of defeating the French; for it may be fearlessly advanced, that the *morale* of the European armies was restored by this and our succeeding campaigns in Spain.

END.

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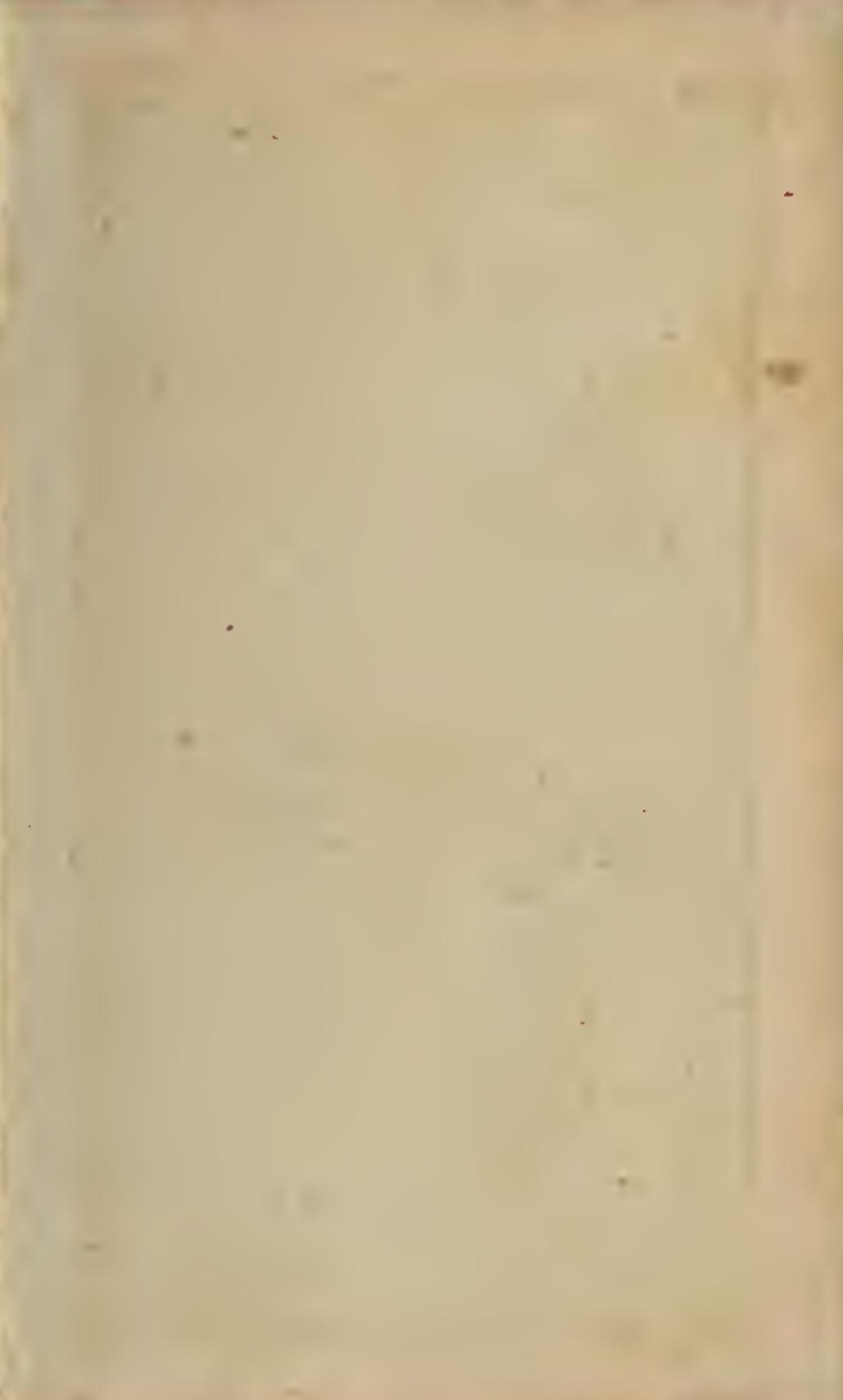
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