

CHAP. VIII a courage impossible to be surpassed, they were
1812. at length compelled to retire. The attack was
April. again renewed, but without more favourable
issue; and nearly all the superior officers being
disabled, the troops were withdrawn to prepare
for fresh efforts when the day should dawn.

In the meanwhile, the third division, led by General Kempt, and commanded by General Picton, advanced to escalade the castle; and on approaching the Rivillas, were received by a heavy fire from all the works to the eastward of the town. They speedily descended into the ditch, and planted their ladders. These, unfortunately, were found too short, and did not reach within four feet of the summit of the rampart. This obstacle, though not insuperable, materially diminished the rapidity of the ascent, and kept the troops longer exposed to a destructive fire than would otherwise have been necessary. Showers of grenades, stones, and rafters of wood, were likewise poured down on them by the enemy, and the slaughter was very great. General Picton and General Kempt were carried from the field severely wounded, and the command of the division devolved on Colonel Campbell of the ninety-fourth. Under this offi-

cer, the attack lost nothing of its energy. The troops, anxious to escape from the dreadful fire to which they were exposed in the ditch, eagerly mounted the ladders, and as they reached the summit, formed on the rampart. A short struggle then ensued,—and in a few minutes the division were in possession of the castle.

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Soon afterwards, the brigade of General Walker, after forcing the barrier on the road to Olivença, succeeded in entering the town by escalade. Before this was effected, several of the ladders broke, and General Walker was disabled by a severe wound. The troops, however, persevered in the assault with a spirit and gallantry which drew the applause of Lord Wellington, who witnessed their efforts from a small eminence near the trenches, from whence he directed the whole movements of attack. The brigade of General Walker then advancing by the ramparts, attacked in rear the troops posted for defence of the breaches, and immediately dispersed them.

No sooner did Lord Wellington receive intelligence of the success of the third and fifth divisions, than he directed the fourth and light divisions again to advance on the breaches; and

CHAP. VIII fresh troops being thrown into the town, all resistance ceased on the part of the garrison. General Philippon and his staff, with about four hundred men, escaped across the river to Fort St. Christoval, and shortly afterwards surrendered.

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The whole of the garrison, amounting nearly to four thousand, were made prisoners. A considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, one hundred and seventy-two pieces of artillery, and more than eighty thousand shot, were found in the place. The expenditure of life, on the part of the allies, during this extraordinary siege, was very great: by the returns, the number of killed and wounded amounted to nearly five thousand.

Considering the boldness of the effort and the magnitude of the obstacles to be overcome, the capture of Badajos is one of those events in our annals, of which Englishmen may well feel proud. "Never, probably," says Colonel Jones, "since the discovery of gunpowder, were men more exposed to its action than those assembled in the ditch to assault the breaches. Many thousand shells and hand-grenades, numerous bags filled with powder, every kind of burning composition and destruc-

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tive missile, had been prepared and placed along the parapet of the whole front ; these, under an incessant roll of musquetry, were hurled into the ditch without intermission for upwards of two hours, giving to its surface an appearance of vomiting fire, and producing sudden flashes of light more vivid than the day. Description, however, conveys but a faint idea of the imposing nature of such a mode of defence. The doors of success were certainly thrown open ; but they were so vigilantly guarded, the approach to them was so strewn with difficulties, and the scene altogether so appalling, that instead of its being a disparagement to the troops to have failed in forcing through them, is it not rather a subject for pride and exultation that they had firmness to persevere in the attempt till recalled ?”

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The fall of Badajos took the French generals even more by surprise than that of Ciudad Rodrigo. General Lery, engineer in chief to the army of the south, wrote to General Kellerman respecting it in the following terms : “ The fall of Badajos cost me eight engineers. I am not yet acquainted with the details of that fatal event. Never was there a place in a better state, better

CHAP.VIII supplied, or better provided with the requisite number of troops. There is in that event a marked fatality. I confess my inability to account for its inadequate defence. Very extensive works have been constructed. *All our calculations have been disappointed.* The army of Portugal withdrew to a greater distance from us when it should have drawn nearer; and thus Lord Wellington has taken the place as it were in presence of two armies, amounting together to about eighty thousand men. This is the consequence of the want of a supreme chief. In short, I think the capture of Badajos *a very extraordinary event*; and I should be much at a loss to account for it in any manner consistent with probability."

The truth is, that had Soult and Marmont profited by the lesson taught them at Rodrigo, and displayed that energy and activity which the crisis demanded, it seems more than probable that Lord Wellington would have been defeated in his object. Notwithstanding the

Relation des Sieges et Defences de Olivença et de Badajos. secrecy with which the preparations for the siege of Badajos were conducted, Soult was not taken by surprise. The Governor, General Philippon, was too shrewd an observer, not to

read aright the signs of the time ; and he no sooner learned that the troops in Elvas were employed in the construction of fascines and gabions, than he apprised Soult that the allies were certainly on the eve of besieging Badajos. At all events, from the moment he became aware that Lord Wellington's army had crossed the Tagus, Soult had, and could have no doubt of the proximate and immediate object of this movement. In such a state of things, that he did not immediately concentrate his forces and march to the relief of Badajos, must be attributed to a gross blunder in calculation. On the seventeenth or eighteenth of March, he must have been aware of the arrival of Lord Wellington at Elvas. A week was sufficient to have enabled him to concentrate at Seville an army of forty thousand men ; and at the head of this force he might have reached Albuera on the third or fourth of April.

Instead of this, Soult appears at this important juncture to have been unaccountably bereft of that energy and activity which eminently distinguished him. He was slow and dilatory in his movements ; he did not conceive that Lord Wellington would have pushed the siege with

CHAP. VIII such unusual vigour and rapidity ; and relying
1812. on the skill of the Governor, and the courage of
the garrison, he calculated on a protracted defence. It was not till the eighth of April, that he reached Villa Franca, where he received the mortifying intelligence of the fall of that fortress, which, by greater rapidity of movement, he might have relieved. Nothing then remained, but to retrace his steps to Seville.

But if Soult be thus open to censure, what shall be said of Marmont? That leader had a high game before him. Had he with one half of his army laid siege to Ciudad Rodrigo, and with the other marched rapidly to Merida by Almaraz, and formed a junction with Soult, he might have repaired the past, and prevented the future disasters of the campaign. On the tenth of March, the allied army was in full march for the south, and in the course of a week from that period, Marmont might have been on the Agueda. He did not arrive there till the twenty-fifth, and was then satisfied with ravaging Lower Beira, and a few piddling advantages gained over the militia. It was impossible that any important consequence could result from his advance to Castello Branco. The movement excited no alarm in

Lord Wellington, who continued his operations CHAP. VIII against Badajos, in the certain conviction, that,

 on its fall, Marmont must instantly retire before him. 1812.

The only plea by which Marmont can be acquitted of flagrant incapacity, is, that he was actuated by jealousy of Soult. That such was the case is far from improbable. The French leaders in Spain, were each intrusted with a separate and distinct sphere of independent command, and receiving their instructions from Paris, were jealous of interference on the part of those who solicited assistance which they were not specially directed to afford. This feeling was perhaps aided by a sentiment of rivalry, which occasioned a want of zeal and cordiality in their combined movements. At all events, had Soult been joined, as he might have been, by twenty thousand of the army of Portugal, on the second or third of April, it is not too much to assert, that the allied army would have been forced to relinquish the siege, and march with all speed to the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo. In the movements of the French armies at this period, there is a laxity and tardiness in remarkable discordance with the necessity of the crisis. Lord Welling-

CHAP. VIII ton, on the other hand, was ever watchful and
 1812. alert, and in deciding on the bold and brilliant
 April. enterprises which marked this campaign, he may
 be supposed to have been influenced less by the
 abstract chances of success, than by those chances
 taken in conjunction with his observations on the
 qualities of his opponents. That these calcula-
 tions were sound, the event proved.

Apr. 11. Soult, on receiving intelligence of the fall of
 Badajos, immediately retraced his steps to Se-
 ville, followed by the cavalry under Sir Staple-
 ton Cotton. On the evening of the eleventh,
 the brigades of Generals Anson and Le Mar-
 chant, succeeded in coming up with his rear-guard
 at Villa Garcia. General Le Marchant immedi-
 ately charged in gallant style, and drove the ene-
 my in the utmost confusion to Llerena. In this
 engagement, upwards of one hundred and thirty
 of the enemy were made prisoners. On the
 same day, Soult continued his retreat to Seville,
 and General Drouet likewise falling back to
 Fuente Ovejuna, the province of Estramadura
 was thus entirely freed from the presence of
 the enemy.

In the meantime, the Conde de Penne Villemur,
 with some thousand men, left the county of

Niebla, and approached Seville on the fifth of CHAP. VIII
 April. He had several skirmishes with the gar-
 rison, and forced them to retire within their
 works; but the smallness of his force prevent-
 ed him from undertaking any thing of impor-
 tance.

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Unfortunately, there existed no unity of ac-
 tion or purpose between the Spanish leaders and
 their allies. Had Ballasteros joined Villemur in
 attacking Seville, it is probable the inhabitants, in-
 fluenced by the appearance of such a force, would
 have risen on the garrison, composed chiefly of
 invalids, and the city would have been taken.
 Such a blow must have been most disastrous to
 the French army. Even had the place been
 abandoned on the approach of Soult, time would
 still have been afforded to remove or destroy
 the immense magazines which the enemy had
 collected in the city.

In the north, the Guerilla warfare was waged
 with increased vigour. Merino, a bold enter-
 prising chief, suddenly attacked a considerable
 body of the enemy near Aranda, and made up-
 wards of five hundred prisoners. This success
 enabled him to make a just, though severe re-
 taliation for the execution of three members of

Apr. 16.

CHAP. VIII the Junta of Burgos, and of some of Merino's
1812. soldiers who had fallen into his hands. The
April. prisoners immediately suffered in the proportion
of twenty for each member of the Junta, and
of ten for each soldier. This act of retribution
was accompanied by a declaration, that similiar
measures would be resorted to, on every re-
newal of the enemy's atrocities.

The Empecinado, Mina, and Sanchez, were likewise in full activity, and continued to occasion great losses to the enemy. General Abadia, with the Gallician army, advanced into Leon, but retreated on the approach of the enemy. The Asturias was occupied by General Bonnet, with his head-quarters at Oviedo.

After the fall of Badajos the allied army was put in motion for the north; and the corps of General Hill alone remained on the south of the Tagus, taking post in the neighbourhood of Merida. Marmont, who, during the siege of Badajos, had pushed on to Sabugal and Castello Branco, was no sooner informed of Lord Wellington's approach than he retired hastily to Ciudad Rodrigo, and, raising the blockade of that place, fell back on Salamanca. Head-quarters were then established at Fuente Guinaldo, and

the army went into cantonments between the CHAP.VIII
 Agueda and the Coa.

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Lord Wellington then prepared to prosecute the ulterior objects of the campaign. He determined to transfer the seat of war from the frontier to the interior provinces of Spain; but, in order to prevent the junction of the French armies, he deemed it necessary, as a preliminary measure, to gain possession of Almaraz, where the enemy had a bridge of boats across the Tagus. As all the permanent bridges had been destroyed, Almaraz was, in truth, the only line of communication below Toledo, between the armies on the north and south of the Tagus; and the enemy, aware of the importance of this bridge, had thrown up works on each side of the river for its protection, while the castle and redoubt of Mirabete, about a league distant, contributed to its security. Upon the southern bank of the river, the bridge was defended by a *tête-du-pont*, and a strong field-work, called Fort Napoleon, on a commanding height. On the opposite side was another called Fort Ragusa, of very considerable strength. These works were garrisoned by about one thousand men, with eighteen guns.

CHAP. VIII Lord Wellington directed Sir Rowland Hill

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to move forward with his corps, and gain possession of this important post. Accordingly, on the twelfth of May, Sir Rowland Hill broke up from Almandrelejo, with his little army, and on the sixteenth reached Xaraicejo. At night he continued his advance, having formed his troops into three columns.

May 16.

Great obstruction, however, was experienced from the badness of the roads, and it was found impossible for the troops to arrive at their several points of destination before daybreak. Sir Rowland Hill, therefore, perceiving there was no longer a chance of taking the enemy by surprise, gave orders to halt in a mountain range about five miles distant from Almaraz, and the attack was delayed till the morning of the nineteenth.

May 17.

In the meanwhile, the enemy were discovered to have raised so formidable a barrier, on the only road by which artillery could be brought from the south, against the works of the bridge, that Sir Rowland Hill determined to leave his guns, and proceed by a mountain track leading through the village of Romangordo. Accordingly, about ten

May 18.

o'clock on the night of the eighteenth, General

Howard's brigade, and the sixth Portuguese regi-
 ment of the line, descended into the plain by a
 most difficult and narrow path, which, in many
 places, did not admit the passage of more than
 one file at a time. By daybreak the head of this
 column had arrived within a few hundred yards
 of Fort Napoleon; but such had been the mag-
 nitude of the obstacles encountered, that several
 hours elapsed before the rear came up. The or-
 der for attack was then given, and the troops,
 advancing from a ravine by which they had
 hitherto been concealed, rushed on to the as-
 sault. General Howard had formed his detach-
 ment into three columns: one, consisting chiefly
 of Portuguese, remained in reserve; another,
 composed of the fiftieth and one wing of the
 seventy-first regiment, directed their efforts a-
 gainst Fort Napoleon. The ninety-second and
 the other wing of the seventy-first, formed the
 third, which was ordered to storm the *tête-du-*
pont and Fort Ragusa, at the same time that the
 attack was made on Fort Napoleon.

The column, destined for the attack of the
 fort, was no sooner discerned than the garri-
 son, aware of the vicinity of an enemy, from a
 feint which had been made early in the morning

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CHAP. VIII on the works of Mirabete, poured in a vehement and destructive fire, which did not succeed in checking the progress of the assailants. The ladders were soon planted; the troops gained the parapet, and in less than ten minutes the fort was carried.

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Thus driven from the fort, the garrison endeavoured to cross the river, pursued by the British, who entered the *tête-du-pont pêle mêle* with the fugitives. There all hope of escape was unexpectedly cut off. The officer commanding in Fort Ragusa, alarmed at the approaching danger, had cut the bridge, and the whole of the garrison on the southern bank were under the necessity of submitting as prisoners of war.

Intimidated by this success, Fort Ragusa was abandoned without even an effort at resistance, and the whole of the enemy's stores, which were very considerable, fell into possession of the victors. The loss sustained by the allies in these operations amounted only to one hundred and seventy-seven in killed and wounded. Of the enemy two hundred and fifty-nine were made prisoners. The works, the bridge, the cannon, and all the stores which could not be conveni-

ently removed, were immediately destroyed; and on the day following Sir Rowland Hill set out on his return.

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Marmont no sooner received intelligence of the march of General Hill than he broke up from Salamanca, and put his army in motion towards the Tagus. Drouet, also, made some movements which indicated an intention of intercepting his retreat; but on learning that General Hill had reached Truxillo on the twenty-first, he retired into Cordova.

In regarding the operations of the present period of the war, nothing is more remarkable than the glaring miscalculations of the French generals, in regard to the activity and enterprise of their enemy. They continually put their armies in motion to relieve fortresses which had already fallen. The English, they had brought themselves to believe, were slow, cautious, and prudent, most clumsy and elaborate in their operations; and their leader, though not without his tact and talent, was incapable of snatching success by a brilliant infringement of the rules of art. The reverses they had incurred at Oporto, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Badajos, were considered as isolated and unaccountable misfortunes,

CHAP. VIII arising from temporary contingencies, and in no
1812. degree attributable to the skill and boldness of
their opponent.

Accordingly, Soult and Marmont were never ready at the right moment. There was great bustle and preparation out of season. Marches were followed by countermarches; advances by retreats. Their anticipations of events had almost uniformly been erroneous. They suffered themselves to be robbed piecemeal of advantages which they were in full condition to have retained. Their calculations had been falsified; their hopes baffled. They had not been defeated in any general engagement, but they had been, what was even more mortifying, *out-generaled*.

CHAPTER IX.

OPERATIONS OF THE ALLIED ARMY—BATTLE
OF SALAMANCA.

DURING the progress of the events which we have imperfectly attempted to detail, the seeds of war, which had been plentifully sown throughout Europe, were already bursting into blossom. Implacable in his hostility to England, Napoleon determined on the gigantic attempt of excluding her commerce from the whole continent of Europe. By the treaty of Tilsit, the Emperor Alexander had acceded to this system of exclusion, which he speedily found to be subversive of the interests of his empire, and incapable of being rigidly enforced. Napoleon, however, was little disposed to modify his policy by the circumstances or necessities of other nations. He insisted on a rigorous adherence to that prohibitory system, by which he trusted that the wealth

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CHAP. IX. and resources of England would eventually be exhausted.

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In few undertakings could Napoleon, with the mighty means at his command, be expected to fail. But a war on trade, is, in truth, nothing less than a war on all the habits and propensities of mankind. It is a war unattended by the pride, the pomp, and circumstance of glorious achievement, but one whose sufferings come home with peculiar force to the business and bosoms of all men. It is a war against enjoyment,—against the comforts and luxuries of civilized life, and affecting the interests of every individual, from the monarch to the peasant. The very attempt to enforce such a system as that demanded by Napoleon, was absurd, and followed by a signal failure. In spite of his decrees, British produce circulated by a thousand secret channels into all the markets of Europe.

In Russia, great relaxation took place in the observance of “the continental system.” Napoleon, not unwilling, perhaps, to take advantage of a plausible pretext for war with that power, made forcible seizure of the Duchy of Oldenburgh. For a time, it was the policy of Alexander to be quiescent under this injury;

but vigorous preparations were made on both sides, and war at length followed. On the ninth of May, Napoleon set out from Paris, to place himself at the head of that immense army, by whose approaching victories, Russia was to be humbled to the dust, and his supreme authority established throughout the civilized world.

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Hitherto the undivided energies of France had been directed towards the conquest of Spain. That had now sunk into a secondary object, and the contest was about to assume a new character. Henceforth, it was scarcely possible that reinforcements should be poured into Spain, with the extraordinary profusion, which, in time past, had enabled the French leaders, amid multiplied disasters, to maintain their hold on the Peninsula. The prodigal expenditure of life to which they were subjected, could now be less easily repaired; and the hopes of many brave hearts, which, amid the darkness lowering on the cause of freedom, had hitherto but faintly glimmered, now rose into brighter flame.

At this critical juncture, however, the amount of the French forces in the Peninsula was very great. The army of the south, commanded by

CHAP. IX. Marshal Soult, was fifty-eight thousand strong.

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That of Portugal, under Marmont, fifty-five thousand. The army of the north, under command of General Souham, mustered about ten thousand. There were forty thousand commanded by Suchet, in the eastern provinces ; and there were about fifteen thousand of the army of the centre, to maintain the security of the capital ; forming, in all, the large aggregate of one hundred and seventy thousand men, chiefly veterans, experienced in the nature of the war in which they were engaged.

The army of Lord Wellington had received, since the commencement of the year, considerable reinforcements, and had become more formidable, both in numbers and discipline, than at any former period of the war. The corps of General Hill, who, by the successful attack on Almaraz, had established a communication with all the allied forces throughout the whole province of Spanish Estramadura, consisted of about ten thousand infantry, and twelve hundred cavalry. The force which Lord Wellington could muster for offensive operations on the north of the Tagus, amounted to about forty thousand infantry, and four thousand cavalry.

With such a force, Lord Wellington, though fully equal to cope singly with either of the great French armies, could effect nothing in case they should succeed in forming a junction. Before advancing against Marmont, therefore, he took every precaution to prevent the occurrence of an event which could not fail to occasion the necessity of instant retreat. General Hill held Almaraz, and Soult was thus cut off from his only direct communication with the north. To keep Marshal Suchet in check, and fix the attention of the French commanders on Granada and Valencia, a considerable body of troops, from the Sicilian army, were to land at Alicante or some other favourable point on the eastern coast. Soult and Drouet, it was hoped, would then find it necessary to withdraw from the western provinces; and the allies might at length expect to secure the full fruits of their victories.

Assured that the Sicilian troops had sailed, Lord Wellington, having completed the formation of magazines at Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo, and upon the Douro, at length put his army in motion, and advanced on Salamanca. Marmont fell back on his approach, leaving a garrison of about eight hundred men in some neighbouring

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CHAP. IX. forts which commanded the bridge across the Tormes.

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The allied army crossed the Tormes on the seventeenth of June, by the fords above and below Salamanca ; and preparations were immediately made for the reduction of the forts. These works had been constructed on the ruins of different convents, and formed collectively a post of considerable strength, which could only be reduced by regular attack. The siege was conducted by the sixth division, under Major-General Clinton ; while the remainder of the army remained in readiness to oppose the army of Marmont, who still endeavoured to keep up a communication with the forts.

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Ground was broken on the night of the seventeenth, and on the nineteenth the guns opened fire. Unfortunately, the ammunition became exhausted before the breach was rendered practicable, and Lord Wellington determined on an attempt by escalade. In this unfortunate attack, Major-General Bowes and one hundred and twenty men fell. The conduct of this gallant officer had been, on all occasions, conspicuous. In leading on the storming party he received a wound, which was no sooner dressed than he returned

to the post of honour, and died gloriously in the service of his country. The monument of a soldier can bear no prouder epitaph than the record of such facts.

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On the twentieth, Marmont arrived in front of the position of St. Christoval, and made a strong demonstration with his cavalry in the plain. A pretty warm skirmish was the consequence. They were gallantly charged by the twelfth light dragoons, commanded by Colonel Ponsonby; and Captain Bull's troop of Horse-artillery was ably manœuvred. The enemy at length retired, leaving twelve horses on the field.

Jun. 20.

On the twenty-first, the French shewed themselves in force in the plain in front of St. Christoval. On this occasion, they displayed a force of not less than fifteen thousand men, as if to tempt the British General to descend from his vantage ground, and try the fortune of a battle. This Lord Wellington declined. During the night, however, the enemy established a post on the right flank of the position, from which General Graham was directed to dislodge him. He accordingly advanced with the seventh division,

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CHAP. IX. and the enemy were immediately driven from the ground, with considerable loss.

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On the morning of the twenty-third, it was discovered that Marmont had withdrawn his army during the night, and taken a position with his right at Cabeça Velosa, his centre at Aldea Rubea, and his left on the Tormes near Huerta, where he made demonstration of passing a large force across the river. As it was evidently the object of Marmont, in this manœuvre, to communicate with the forts, Lord Wellington, directing a brigade of cavalry to cross the Tormes, changed the front of his army, placing the right at the ford of Santa Martha, and the advanced posts at Aldea Lengua. During the night, Marmont crossed the Tormes with the greater part of his army; but observing that Sir Thomas Graham had likewise passed the river with two divisions, he re-crossed at Huerta, and again took up his former position.

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In the meantime, supplies of ammunition having been brought up, on the twenty-sixth the fire on the forts was recommenced. On the twenty-seventh, the buildings in the largest fort, St. Vincente, were in flames; and another fort

being breached, the commander of St. Vincente expressed a desire to capitulate at the expiration of three hours. Lord Wellington, however, perceiving that the object of this proposal was to gain time, ordered an immediate assault. The party employed in this service, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Davies of the thirty-sixth regiment, performed it in the most gallant manner. The smaller forts were carried; and the attack on St. Vincente had already commenced, when the Governor sent out a flag, to notify his acceptance of the terms offered by Lord Wellington; and the whole garrisons, in number about seven hundred men, were made prisoners of war.

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The forts thus captured, were found to be of great strength, the enemy having been engaged for nearly three years in their construction. They were armed with thirty pieces of artillery; and in St. Vincente was found a large quantity of clothing and military stores, which was given to the Spaniards. The whole of the works were immediately destroyed.

The forts had no sooner fallen than Marmont broke up from his position, and retired towards the Douro. During this movement he was closely