

On ordinary occasions he wore a common blue frock, and from four to six in the afternoon might be seen so arrayed, and with a round hat on his head, taking his exercise on what was the mall, or fashionable promenade, the quay. For thither, as regularly as men now ride or drive or walk of an afternoon in Hyde Park, Generals, staff-officers, and officers of regiments—with as many ladies, English and French and Spanish, as the town contained, would repair; to inhale the sea-breezes when the weather was fine, and to greet one another as they passed and re-passed in groups.

Nor was the quay without points of interest independently of that which it derived from the uses to which it was now turned. Day by day vessels came in laden with articles of luxury, such as tea, sugar, wine, and hams from England, as well as with barley and hay for the horses, and, when the need was great, with clothing for the men. As these arrived, sometimes singly, sometimes in little squadrons, they were guided to their berths by pilots, till in the end the little harbour became completely crammed; and room for fresh arrivals could be made only by sending to sea, at short notice, all which had discharged their cargoes.

The people of the place used to speak in admiration of this enormous increase to their commerce. While their own countrymen occupied the town, not a mast, except that of a *chasse-marée*, or coasting schooner, ever entered the port. Now it was crowded. But if they gained in this respect, they suffered undeniable loss in another. Their streets, which used to swarm with gay uniforms, now echoed to the tramp of long strings of mules, laden with stores, and driven by Spanish muleteers, not always very scrupulous in treating foot-passengers with decency; or else droves of bullocks, going on to slaughter, thronged them; or carts, or waggons, or guns, splashed through them. As to the shops, comparatively few were re-opened; and of these not one presented at the windows specimens of articles which might tempt to acts of plunder. The truth is that the French tradespeople, unlike the French peasants, never could bring themselves to trust, absolutely, to the honour of the invaders. As many

as returned to their homes, were bound to feel secure, so far as their persons were concerned; but they did not care to open a traffic, except in liquors and other articles such as soldiers were likely to purchase and consume on the spot.

Lord Wellington was anxious to conciliate the people by contributing to their amusements as well as by protecting their persons. With this view he caused the bands of regiments within reach, to play from time to time in the Champs de Mars, and he encouraged his young men to get up balls. There was considerable difficulty at first in accomplishing the latter object. On consulting with the Mayor it was found that very few ladies, and not many respectable shopkeepers' daughters, could be produced, and of English ladies only six were forthcoming. Now it would not do for the Commander of the forces to throw open his own *salons*, and the result to be a failure. The Mayor, therefore, undertook to play the part of host, and a dollar a-piece was charged as the price of admission, for gentlemen only. I cannot say that the success was great. About 30 elderly, and half as many young French ladies, made their appearance, each escorted by her maid, who carried a lantern before her; and our six fair country-women chimed in, though not very cordially. Of gentlemen, all arrayed in brilliant uniforms, not fewer than 200 were present; and among the rest the Marquis himself. The music was good, and the dancing indifferent. Only one out of the six Englishwomen would or could waltz, and cotillions and country-dances flagged for lack of partners. One French beau volunteered a hornpipe, through which he got with great dexterity. Of the English beaux, the great bulk stood apart or drank freely, and then began to romp. Lord Wellington did not dance, and retired soon after midnight. On the whole the Mayor's ball was pronounced to be a failure.

Though the Mayor's ball did not succeed, the ball as an institution was far from passing into disrepute. Others followed, which though less select, perhaps, so far as the ladies were concerned, went off better. Theatricals were also attempted, but they lacked the spirit of those at Guinaldo and Frenada; for the Light Division were the great



actors of the army, and they lay at a distance from St Jean de Luz. On the whole, however, the winter passed very agreeably. Yet to Lord Wellington it was a season of ceaseless labour. If he but omitted for a single day to carry on his correspondence, letters accumulated to such an extent as would have deterred any other man from facing them. If, as more than once happened, he was detained from home for two or three days in succession, the arrears became frightful. On one of these occasions, after some movements on the part of the French had called him suddenly away, and kept him three days with Lord Hill, the Judge Advocate-General entered his room with a bundle of papers, and saw him seated in front of a table covered with immense piles of unopened letters. "What have you got?" demanded the Marquis, looking up. "Only some cases for your Lordship to consider, and a few sentences to confirm." "Take them away," cried the Marquis, raising his hand, and bringing it before his eyes, "Take them away, and put them where you will, only don't expect me to look at them now."

It was in the course of this winter that the Bourbons and their partisans began to entertain hopes of that restoration which ultimately took place. The first of the emigrés who showed himself at head-quarters was the Comte de Grammont—a gentleman in manners and appearance, and the representative of a long line of landed proprietors in this part of the country. Everybody treated him with respect, and he was a constant guest at Lord Wellington's table. By and by came the Duc d'Angoulême, not openly avowed, but under an assumed name, and it is fair to add that neither by his manners nor by his appearance was he so successful in conciliating public opinion as the Comte de Grammont. A short, rather mean-looking man, with a strongly-marked Bourbon cast of countenance, and endless grimaces, as he entered or quitted a room, he often put the gravity of Lord Wellington's staff and guests sorely to the test. It was the fashion in the Marquis's household to call all the strangers who came to head-quarters, Tigers; and the Duc d'Angoulême got at once the soubriquet of "the Royal Tiger."

The Duc d'Angoulême added by his presence not a little to Lord Wellington's embarrassments. There was, in point of fact, no Bourbon party in the Basque provinces of France, in those days. All men were sick of the empire, with its desolating wars and cruel taxation, but the Bourbons were as much forgotten, except by a few old people, as if they had never reigned. It was not easy to convince them or their followers of that fact, far less to reconcile them to the possible conclusion of a peace which should not provide for their return to power. Now, Lord Wellington, though always courteous and delicate before the Duc d'Angoulême, would never consent to have it appear that he was fighting for the restoration of an exiled family. He contemplated to the last the probability of coming to terms with Napoleon; and in his correspondence with the Government at home, spoke of the arrangement as in itself not to be condemned. "If we can persuade Buonaparte to be moderate, he is perhaps the best ruler of France that we could get." The Duc d'Angoulême, on the other hand, urged an immediate proclamation of Louis the XVIII.; and because of his opposition to so wild a scheme, both now and at a subsequent period, the Duke incurred, and never afterwards lost, the personal dislike of the whole Bourbon family.

While the Bourbons thus advocated a policy purely selfish, the English Government, on the suggestion of the Emperor of Russia, proposed to Lord Wellington a choice of plans, either to transfer himself and the British portion of his army to the Netherlands, leaving the war in the South to be carried on by the Spaniards and Portuguese; or, if that were considered inadvisable, to push forward in the depth of winter, and operate thereby a strong diversion in favour of the Allies. His answer would be imperfectly given except in his own words. Writing on the 21st of December, 1813, to Lord Bathurst, he says, "In military operations there are some things which cannot be done: one of these is, to move troops in this country during, or immediately after, a violent fall of rain. I believe I shall lose many more men than I shall ever replace by putting my troops in camp in this bad weather; but I should be guilty of a use-



less waste of men, if I were to attempt an operation during the violent falls of rain which we have here. Our operations, then, must necessarily be slow; but they shall not be discontinued. In regard to the scene of the operations of the army, it is a question for the Government, and not for me. By having kept in the field about 30,000 men in the Peninsula, the British Government have now, for five years, given employment to 200,000 French troops, of the best Napoleon had, as it is ridiculous to suppose that either the Spaniards or Portuguese could have resisted for a moment if the British force had been withdrawn. The enemy now employed against us cannot be less than 100,000 men; indeed more including garrisons, and I see in the French newspapers, that orders have been given for the formation at Bourdeaux of an army of reserve of 100,000 men. Is there any one weak enough to suppose that one third of the numbers first mentioned would be employed against the Spaniards and Portuguese, if we were withdrawn? The other observation which I have to submit is, that in a war in which every day offers a crisis, the results of which may affect the world for ages, the change of the scene of the operations of the British army would put that army entirely *hors de combat* for four months at least, even if the new scene were Holland; and they would not then be such a machine as this army is. Your Lordship, however, very reasonably asks what objects we propose to ourselves here, which are to induce Napoleon to make peace? I am now in a commanding situation on the most vulnerable frontier of France, probably the only vulnerable frontier. If I could put 20,000 Spaniards into the field, which I could do if I had money, and was properly supported by the fleet, I must have the only fortress there is on this frontier, if it can be called a fortress, and that in a very short space of time. If I could put 40,000 Spaniards into the field, I should probably have my posts on the Garonne. Does any man suppose that Napoleon would not feel an army in such a position, more than he would feel 30,000 or 40,000 British troops, laying siege to one of his fortresses in Holland? If it be only the resources of men and money of which he will be deprived, and

the reputation he will lose by our being in this position, it will do ten times more to procure peace than ten armies on the side of Flanders.”

Arguments such as these, put with the force of Lord Wellington's high authority, could not be controverted. The English Government left him to move when he judged that the proper time had come. It abandoned also the wild scheme of transferring him and his troops to Flanders; but it overlooked his indirect entreaty for means to bring forward an effective Spanish army, and it weakened him by sending to Holland Sir Thomas Graham with a force which would have been far better employed under his immediate orders. The effects of this mistaken policy were felt in the ensuing campaign, of which I shall now proceed to give a brief outline.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN—BATTLE OF ORTHEZ. \*

IN front of Lord Wellington's winter quarters lay a country intersected by many deep and tortuous rivers, of which the soil was rich and the lanes deep, and the roads, except where one great paved causeway ran, ill made, and in rainy weather all but impassable. Towards the sea it is flat, and much overgrown with wood; inland those rises and falls abound, which almost everywhere seem to merge a mountain district into the champaign.

It was protected at this time along the Lower Adour by Bayonne, and the entrenched camp, which lay round it; while higher up, the features of the landscape were such as to offer, at almost every mile, good defensible positions. But its strength, in a military point of view, lay mainly in this, that no invader would dare to penetrate far beyond the Adour, leaving the entrenched camp to threaten his communications—while to threaten the camp and the army in the field at the same time, would require a greater numerical force than was supposed to be at Lord Wellington's disposal.

For all these difficulties the English General was prepared: he caused a fleet of coasters to be got together, some in Passages, some at St Jean de Luz, with planking and tackle sufficient to bridge the Adour at a spot nine miles below Bayonne, while at the same time he brought up his pontoon train by the great road and parked it between St Jean de Luz and Bidard. His cavalry and heavy guns, which

for convenience of forage had passed the winter in the valley of the Bidassoa, were called in, and on the 14th of February, 1814, just as the young herbage was beginning to make its appearance, he put his columns in motion.

His first advances were directed against the enemy's left. His own left meanwhile made a demonstration, but halted, as if checked by the aspect of the entrenched camp at Anglette. The consequence was that Soult, seeing no measures in progress for crossing the Adour in that direction, believed his right to be safe, and drew off his troops, except about 12,000 men, to meet and restrain the English on his left. Of the marches and partial encounters which took place upon and below the many streams which rise in the Pyrenees, and flow into the Adour, I must leave the general historian to tell. They were at once trying and deeply interesting to such as took part in them; and they led to the concentration of two corps of almost equal strength on either bank of the Gave de Pau where it flows in front of Orthez. Soult carried into that position about 40,000 men, whom he placed along a range of heights, with St Bois on his left and Orthez on his right. Lord Wellington faced him, with a force somewhat superior in cavalry and guns, but in infantry rather inferior. And on the 28th the battle was fought. It was long and obstinately contested—appearing at one time to go so much against the English, that Soult wrote a despatch from the field preparing the French Minister of War for tidings of a victory. But Lord Wellington suddenly changed his order of battle, and attacking a point which was supposed to be out of reach of danger, broke through the enemy's line, and doubled it up. The French retired at first in good order, carrying their artillery with them—but from all sides the victors poured in, and the retreat became little better than a rout. Six pieces of cannon, with many prisoners, remained in the hands of the victors.

While these things were going on upon the English right, Sir John Hope with the left of the army, manœuvred to keep the garrison of Bayonne, and of the entrenched camp, from interrupting the great work which he had in hand. The fleet of coasters put to sea, and after much delay, occasioned



by a succession of adverse gales, they passed the bar at the mouth of the Adour, and began to take their proper stations. Meanwhile above 600 men were thrown across in rafts, while a battery of eighteen-pounders drove on shore a flotilla of smaller craft, and forced a corvette, which kept guard beside the town, to move up the stream, and seek shelter under the guns of the citadel. And then followed that series of operations which placed Bayonne in a state of siege, while it opened a communication between St Jean de Luz and the right bank of the Adour. Thus Lord Wellington's army became of necessity divided. About 20,000, including two corps of Spaniards, remained with Sir John Hope, while the residue, not now exceeding 60,000 at the most, closed up in pursuit of Soult, till circumstances again led to their further subdivision.

Driven from his strong position near Orthez, Soult directed the retreat of his army upon St Sever. This, though a difficult, was a wise proceeding; for the road to Bordeaux, which was more open to him, could not have been held—Lord Wellington following sharply. In this case the only resource left for Soult would have been a march into the Llandes; where, if he escaped destruction from the enemy's superior cavalry, he must have been entirely cut off from communicating with Suchet, or receiving reinforcements from the interior. On the other hand, by taking the road to St Sever, he brought himself at the close of every march nearer to the army of Catalonia; and he had already, with commendable forethought, prepared another fortified field of battle at Toulouse. Fortune so far favoured him, likewise, that the rains, which had ceased for a while, set in again heavily, amid the pelting of which Lord Wellington followed him as far as Sault-Navaille. There, in consequence of the failure of light, the English halted; and, next day, continued the pursuit in three distinct columns. The centre, marching upon St Sever, crossed the Adour, unopposed. The left made for Mount de Marsan, where it took possession of a large magazine of provisions. Hill, with the right, overtook Clausel at Aire, and immediately attacked him. It was a sharp encounter; but it ended in the overthrow of the

French, who retreated across the Adour, abandoning the town. With this passage of arms, the pursuit came to an end. All the bridges on all the rivers in front were broken down. The rivers themselves rose to flood; and the roads, and especially the by-paths, became difficult for the passage of guns, and quite impracticable for the pontoon train. Lord Wellington was thus reduced to a state of comparative inactivity, of which Soult availed himself, with his usual ability, to restore order in his ranks, and to gather in as many conscripts as could be collected from the districts round him.

It is impossible to contemplate the course of these events, taking into account the nature of the country, and the extent of space over which military operations were spread, without being struck with the consummate ability which Lord Wellington, as a tactician, exhibited throughout. In sixteen days, he had effected the passage of five great and many smaller rivers. He had forced the enemy to abandon two *têtes-de-pont*, and numerous works of less importance. He had fought with success one great and two minor battles; taken six pieces of cannon, and five thousand prisoners. He had seized the magazines at Dax, Aire, and Mont de Marsan; thrown a bridge over the mouth of the Adour; and besides investing St Jean Pied-de-Port, and other lesser fortresses, now in his rear, he had placed Bayonne, the bulwark of France on this side, in a state of siege. Finally, he had compelled Soult to uncover Bordeaux, and retreat from the Adour before effecting a junction with the army of Catalonia. His force was, in the aggregate, doubtless superior to that which Soult could now oppose to him. But on no occasion, when the armies met, either collectively or in detachments, was the scale more than turned, and that very lightly, on either side. By this time, however, the French army laboured under that depression of moral courage to which all troops become subject after frequent defeats. Physically brave, Frenchmen cannot cease to be. To the last they fought stoutly, when face to face with the English. But they fought, or believed that they fought, the losing game; and on that account, as much as through the superior gallantry of their assailants, they lost it. Besides, they



were out-generaled on every occasion, and on every occasion expected to be out-generaled. While Soult was considering the use to which he might best turn some temporary advantage, Lord Wellington, as in the battle of Orthez, changed his plan; and by a fresh attack, where no attack was anticipated, converted defeat into victory. Unfriendly critics blame Lord Wellington for losing time in his pursuit of the enemy, whom he had beaten. But critics, whether friendly or the reverse, overlook the fact that Lord Wellington sought at this time, not to make a mere inroad into France, but firmly to establish himself there. It was necessary, therefore, that he should render his presence, and that of his army, as little as possible offensive to the people. Hence, to move without his supplies, and thus be driven to subsist by requisitions, was an extremity to which he would never consent to be reduced. Besides, he had great political objects before him; and these he believed that he would most effectually subserve by adopting that course which after experience proved to have been, even in a purely military point of view, the most judicious.

The south of France was greatly agitated at this time. Weary of the war, and of the miseries which it brought upon them, the people had become weary, also, of the existing government. But they were by no means at one in desiring the restoration of the old family, though the old family had its partisans. It was necessary that Lord Wellington should deal tenderly by these feelings; neither absolutely rejecting the advances of the Bourbon party, nor absolutely declaring for a revolution which might never take effect. He steered his course with as much of wisdom as of firmness. In Bordeaux, for example, loyalty to the Bourbons was said to be almost universal. He determined to give it a chance, by marching thither a corps, which, if it effected no other purpose, might open for him the Lower Garonne. To Marshal Beresford, however, whom he employed on this service, he gave strict orders not on any account to provoke a revolution. Should the authorities of their own accord proclaim Louis XVIII., he was to offer no hindrance to the arrangement; but he was to avoid the very

appearance of suggesting, or even of officially supporting it. Bordeaux, like every other town and district occupied by the allied troops, must, so long as hostilities continued, be governed by magistrates deriving their authority from the commander of the invading army. At the same time open hostility to the government of Napoleon was to be proclaimed, and magistrates and people equally assured, that whatever domestic arrangements France might prefer, would be accepted by the Allies, provided they brought peace to Europe.

This policy, though, in point of fact, more favourable to their pretensions than one of open partisanship, proved the reverse of satisfactory to the Bourbon princes. The Duc d'Angoulême protested against it, and demanded, as representing the king, his uncle, authority to unfurl the white flag, and to administer the affairs of the conquered country. He was respectfully, but firmly reminded, that, till the Allied Sovereigns should cease to treat Napoleon as the ruler of France, the General of their armies could not presume to recognise any other ruler. At the same time the Duc was not discouraged from gathering his adherents about him; and arrangements were made for supplying them with arms, should arms be required. Meanwhile, however, everything was done which prudence and humanity dictated, to establish between the invaders and the invaded the best understanding. With English and Portuguese regiments strict discipline prevailed. Brigandage was unknown, and for individual acts of outrage, when they occurred, severe retribution was exacted. For example, having called upon the people, by proclamation, to protect themselves, Lord Wellington applauded certain peasants, who, in resisting an attempt to plunder their village, shot one British soldier, and brought another to head-quarters. The latter Lord Wellington executed on the spot. Indeed, he went further; for on one occasion he sent home, in disgrace, an officer of rank, because he had permitted his men to destroy the communal archives of a small town. The consequence was, that the English soon became honoured guests in the houses of French families, and that the Portuguese were, at least, not disliked. It was more difficult to deal with the Spaniards. They soon



returned to their old habits, which threatened at one moment to bring about very serious results. "Maintain," wrote Lord Wellington to General Freyre, "the strictest discipline, without which we are lost." And again, writing to Morillo, he expresses himself thus: "I have lost 20,000 men in this campaign; but it was not in order that General Morillo, or anybody else, should come in and plunder the French peasantry; as long as I command I will not permit it; if they wish to plunder they must find another chief. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether I command a large army or a small one; but whether great or small, it must obey me, and above all, it must not plunder."

It is curious to observe how entirely this line of policy, with all the results arising out of it, was Lord Wellington's policy, and his only. The northern powers condemned it; the Bourbons clamoured against it; and his own Government urged him to modify it, in order that France might, at all events, be divided against itself. He never approved of the procedure, but he so far yielded to the pressure from without as to issue, about this time, two proclamations, inviting the French people to declare against Napoleon. "Come," he said, in one of these, "and rally under the banner of your legitimate prince:" in the other, after contrasting the rival dynasties and their principles of action, he promises, in the event of a return to legitimacy, "No more tyranny, no more war, no more conscriptions, no more vexatious imposts." And the proclamations were not without effect. Men received them as an appeal which was the more deserving of attention, because it came to them from one who had rendered himself respected, almost beloved, by the equity and gentleness of his own proceedings. Indeed, it is not going too far to say, that the revolution in public opinion, which began at this time to become perceptible in the South of France, turned much less upon the prestige of a dethroned royalty than upon the wisdom and moderation of the English General. We find this truth not obscurely indicated in a letter written at the time from Bayonne. "The wise conduct of the English General, and the excellent discipline which he maintains among his troops, do us more harm than the loss

of battles. All the peasantry desire to place themselves under his protection." In the same spirit Soult expressed himself when complaining of the frequent desertions of his soldiers, and the impossibility of effecting a general rising against the invader. "I shall not be surprised," he wrote to the Minister of War, "to see the inhabitants of these districts soon taking up arms against us." M. Brialmont has well described the state of things in the following words:—"With an energy and a patriotism which were too rare at that period, Soult made incredible efforts to re-establish public opinion; and called upon the French to defend at least the soil of their country against foreign armies. 'Let us show ourselves Frenchmen,' he cried, 'and die with arms in our hands, rather than survive our dishonour.' Vain hope! the Government of Napoleon, like other tyrannies, had enervated men's character, and substituted for true patriotism a species of national vanity, which could be gratified only by the prestige of victory. At the first reverse the feeling evaporated, and the French people, amid the clouds of smoke which obscured the soil of Europe, saw only their own blood uselessly shed, their families wasted away, their goods taken from them, their happiness destroyed. However legitimate might be these subjects of regret, whatever amount of blame might attach to Napoleon, it is still impossible not to admire the heroic bands, the slaves of duty and honour, who, up to the last moment, gathered round the tricoloured flag. Entire devotion to a cause, even if it be unjust, inspires greater respect than defection, sanctioned, though it be, by important considerations of state."



## CHAPTER XXIV.

ADVANCE TO TOULOUSE—BATTLE OF TOULOUSE—SORTIE FROM  
BAYONNE—CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES.

HAVING extricated his army from the danger which threatened it, Soult halted between Maubeurguet and Rubastein, in a position which enabled him to cover Tarbes, and to watch the development of his adversary's designs. The English, he persuaded himself, must of necessity move, either upon Bordeaux or Toulouse. If they took the former route, he, as his letters show, was prepared to throw himself upon their rear; if the latter, then he hoped that he should be able seriously to disturb their left. He seems never to have contemplated the probability of their attempting both objects at the same time; he, therefore, took no steps to prevent it. Yet such was Lord Wellington's plan. Weakening himself to the extent of 12,000 English and Portuguese troops, he detached Beresford on the 8th with the 4th and 7th divisions, and Vivian's light dragoons, to take possession of Bordeaux, while with the remainder, consisting of the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and light divisions, and the bulk of the cavalry, he himself stood fast at Aire, ready to take advantage of any false move into which his adversary might be hurried.

And here there befell one of those contingencies which are not very frequent in war, but on which, when they do occur, the success of campaigns almost always turns. Their sources of intelligence failed both Lord Wellington and Soult. Each received exaggerated reports of the strength of the other; each believed what he heard, and was guided by it. Lord

Wellington, convinced that Suchet had joined Soult, abstained from molesting him in Beresford's absence; Soult, unacquainted with the fact of Beresford's march, was content to maintain a purely defensive attitude. At last, however, on the 12th Soult took the initiative. Orders had reached him from Paris to move upon Pau, so that his left might rest upon the Pyrenees; and he now pushed forward between Aire and Garlin, hoping to strike a blow against one or other of the somewhat scattered divisions of the Allies. But Lord Wellington was not to be surprised. His troops closed rapidly in, and for three days the hostile armies faced one another. On the 16th, however, Soult heard of the capture of Bordeaux by Beresford, and labouring under the impression that his adversary had been strongly reinforced (though, in truth, the only troops which joined him were Freyre's corps of 8000 Spaniards, and they came up on the 13th and 14th), he became alarmed for his own communications, and retreated before dawn by St Gaudens towards Toulouse.

While these things were going on along the course of the Upper Adour, Marshal Beresford effected his purpose at Bordeaux. The French garrison retired as he approached, and the magistracy and people received him with open arms. It was to no purpose that, acting on Lord Wellington's instructions, he advised the authorities to pause before committing themselves; the loyalty of the mayor could not be restrained, and Louis the Eighteenth was proclaimed, amid the wildest rejoicing. The forts which commanded the navigation of the river still, however, held out, and the means at Beresford's disposal were not, upon investigation, considered adequate to the reduction of the most important of them. But the only inconvenience arising out of this circumstance was, that the estuary of the Garonne could not, as yet, be used as a harbour for the British fleet; an arrangement for which, till the army should be more advanced, there was no very urgent necessity.

Satisfied with what had been done, and believing that one infantry division, with a few squadrons of horse, would suffice to maintain order in Bordeaux, Lord Wellington direct-



ed Marshal Beresford to return with the rest to his old position on the Adour. He had previously instructed General Clinton in Catalonia, to break up his force altogether, and to send to him, through the valley of the Ebro, 4000 of the best of his infantry. Neither this detachment, however, nor others, which were on the move by sea and land, from Lisbon and from England, arrived in time to take part in the operations which he meditated. Soult had retired on the 16th; Beresford came in late on the 17th; and at an early hour on the 18th the advance began.

It was Lord Wellington's object to throw himself, by a rapid march, into the valley of the Adour, and to bar against the French the great road leading from Tarbes to St Gaudens and Toulouse. Soult had anticipated the danger, and now occupied not only Tarbes itself, but Vic-de-Bigorre, a small town distant from Tarbes about three leagues. With the corps which held that place, the English advanced guard became engaged on the 19th, and forced it to retire. Next day, the Allies, moving as they had heretofore done, in two columns, had a second affair at and around Tarbes, where the left, under Hill, found itself confronted by d'Erlon's, Clausel's, and Reille's divisions. The Allies were again successful, but the enemy escaped, because the pursuers, encumbered with their bridge-train, and a long array of baggage animals, were unable to cut in upon the fugitives at Trie, and to head them in the plains of Muret. Indeed, herein lay the great hindrance to Lord Wellington throughout the whole of his campaign in the south of France. The innumerable rivers with which the country is intersected were all passable at will by the defending army. So long as they ran in Soult's rear the bridges remained; but the moment Soult crossed, he broke the bridges down; thus interposing between him and his pursuers obstacles which would have proved insurmountable, had not Lord Wellington carried with him the necessary appliances for repairing them. And so with respect to supplies of forage and provisions. Moving through a country where, for political reasons, it was essential to conciliate, and, as much as possible, to spare the inhabitants, his commissariat mules were,

to the leader of the allied troops, as necessary as his guns. The enemy, on the other hand, divested themselves of all impediments. They compelled each district as they arrived in it to feed them, and they pressed, without scruple, cattle and horses for draft, as often as they were required. Hence they could not well fail to out-march their pursuers, and to choose from time to time their points of resistance. The consequence was that Soult arrived in Toulouse three whole days before Lord Wellington; an interval of the greatest possible importance to him, and which he did not fail, with his usual sagacity, to turn to good account.

The selection of Toulouse as the point on which he should retire, indicated both talent and resolution on the part of Soult. It gave him the command of several lines of operation; such as by Carcassonne towards Suchet, or by Alby upon Lyons, while it placed him in the best possible attitude for watching the schemes of the Legitimatisists, and maintaining the authority of the existing Government. Covered on three sides by the canal of Languedoc, and on the fourth by the Garonne, the town itself was surrounded within these barriers by an old wall, which, having towers at intervals, was capable of offering serious resistance, except to heavy artillery. Soult displayed great engineering skill in improving these defences. He converted the canal, from the point where it falls into the Garonne as far up as the bridge of Demoiselles, into an outer line. This line protected the Carcassonne road, by which a junction between himself and Suchet could be effected, whether the latter should decide on operating a diversion in his favour from Catalonia, or that both should retire upon Beziers.

The canal of Languedoc lay, for a considerable space, within musket-shot of the town wall. It could everywhere be swept by cannon. But further to the north-east, between it and the river Ers, runs a range of heights, called Mount Rave. These Soult fortified by throwing up, at convenient distances, five redoubts, and connecting them with retrenchments. On the south-west side, with the Garonne flowing between, stood the faubourg of St Cyprien, which, like the town, was defended by an old wall, and



served all the purposes of a *tête-de-pont*. Thus was constructed an entrenched camp of the most formidable kind, of which Toulouse itself may be described as the citadel, every avenue of approach being covered by field-works, and protected by a numerous artillery.

From this position, which he not unnaturally regarded as impregnable, Soult wrote to Suchet, imploring him to forget everything, except the condition of their country, and to come to his support. It was the last appeal, and it met with no response. Suchet pleading that he had not 3000 men disposable, though, in point of fact, he could muster 13,000, refused to give up his separate command, and Soult was left with his own army and the division of General Paris to wage such a war as he could. Yet, even unassisted from Catalonia, he cannot be said to have stood at great disadvantage towards his adversary. His position was excellent. The muster-rolls of his army show that he had 39,160 combatants under arms, and that his artillery amounted to 80 pieces. Lord Wellington, on the other hand, was able to bring against him only 45,000 infantry, of whom 15,000 were Spaniards, with 6000 cavalry and 64 guns. Whatever the English General might gain, therefore, by mere excess of numbers, he more than lost, partly in the composition of his infantry, partly in the difficulties of the ground on which he was about to operate. It was, in every point of view, a fair fight, the assailants having, indeed, a harder part to play in it than the defenders.

Lord Wellington moving slowly, as the state of the roads compelled him to do, arrived on the 26th in sight of Toulouse. The enemy drew in their outposts on his approach, and took post behind the Garonne and the Lers. It was the first intention of the English General to pass the Garonne above the town, and thereby to interpose between Soult and Montauban. Indeed, Sir Rowland Hill's corps was actually thrown across in the night, just above the junction of the Ariège with the Garonne, and directed to march upon Cintegabelle, where there was a bridge upon the latter stream. But the melting of the snow in the mountains, together with the heavy rains of the past week, had so filled

