

not a single musket-shot spoke of a collision between them and the enemy. The whole was a delusion. The Spaniards, demoralized by their defeat a few days previously, fled at the first appearance of the enemy, and Sir Arthur and his staff suddenly beheld with astonishment clouds of French skirmishers hastening round the château. There was not a moment to be lost. Without uttering a word, the group turned, ran hastily down-stairs, jumped into their saddles, and put spurs to their horses. A second surprise now appeared to take place, for the French, alarmed by the clatter of horses' feet behind them, opened to the right and left, and the English General, his staff, and orderlies galloped through. Fortunately some English infantry were not far off. A smart skirmish ensued, amid the tumult of which Sir Arthur returned unhurt to his position at Talavera. "It was an awkward predicament enough," the Duke used to say, "but we had but one way out of it. We did not pick our steps, you may depend upon it, in running down-stairs. The orderlies had behaved with perfect steadiness. They took no notice of what was passing outside, but sat upon their horses, holding ours. We were soon in the saddle, and then there was a general dash through the gateway, and high time it was. If the French had been cool, they might have taken us all; but the apparition of a body of horsemen in their rear seemed to frighten them; they opened out to the right and left, and we dashed through. Before they recovered their senses we were safe enough, though not, as you may suppose, in the best humour with the Valoroses, who had played us so shabby a trick."

In taking up his ground for the expected battle, Sir Arthur had stationed General Hill's division on his extreme left, placing it upon an eminence between which and the mountains ran a narrow valley, everywhere commanded by the English guns. The better to strengthen his centre, a redoubt had been begun, but it was still incomplete when the approach of the enemy became known. He contented himself therefore with placing behind it a division of English infantry, with a brigade of English cavalry and some Spanish horsemen in support. Mackenzie's troops were intended, as

they came in, to prolong the line to the right, and Campbell's division touched the Spaniards, and the enclosures which they held. The combined armies showed a total strength of 44,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 100 guns. But of this infantry and cavalry 19,000 only were English, the rest being Cuesta's undisciplined and ill-armed rabble. On the other hand, Victor, Sebastiani, and Joseph were at the head of 43,000 infantry, 7000 cavalry, and 90 guns, all well appointed, well drilled; homogeneous, and unaccustomed to defeat. The odds were terribly against the Allies.

Driving Mackenzie's troops before him, Victor arrived, about two in the afternoon, in sight of the English position. He made no delay in attacking. The two French divisions which had been engaged at the Casa de Salinas took ground to the right and fell upon Hill with great fury. For a moment they seemed to prevail. Two German battalions, which formed part of this division, yielded to the shock, and the enemy crowned the summit of the hill. But they did not stand there long. General Sherbrook, whose division communicated by the left with that of Hill, wheeled round one of his brigades, which charged the French in flank and overthrew them. It was to no purpose that Victor repeatedly reinforced such of his troops as were engaged. Though renewing the attack more than once, and arriving more than once within a few yards of the summit, the French never reached it again, but after a fierce combat waged far into the night, were driven at the point of the bayonet back into the plain. Both hosts slept that night upon their arms. The French, well supplied, eat and drank before they lay down; the Spaniards likewise fared well; the English were starving. Throughout the two previous days no rations had been issued to them, except a handful of flour per man, so grossly forgetful of the engagements under which they had come were their Spanish allies. They were up, however, and in line long before dawn on the 28th, and just as the morning broke the battle was renewed. It raged furiously till noon, when a pause in the firing occurred, of which the troops on both sides took advantage to drink out of a rivulet which flowed between their positions. Meanwhile their leaders busied

themselves in re-arranging their respective lines, and examining the dispositions of the enemy. And here an incident befell, which deserves notice, as testifying to the extraordinary coolness and self-possession of Sir Arthur Wellesley. He was seated on the brow of an eminence whence the whole field of battle could be surveyed, when Colonel Donkin, the commander of a brigade which communicated directly with the Spaniards, rode up. He handed a letter to Sir Arthur, at the same time announcing that he had himself received it from the Duc del Albuquerque, and intimating that he was not unacquainted with its contents. They were of the most startling kind, for they announced that Cuesta was about to pass over to the enemy. Sir Arthur read the letter, put it into his pocket, and said in a calm, clear tone: "Very well, Colonel; you may go back to your brigade!" No more passed; no more was ever heard of the business. Whether Sir Arthur gave any credence to the story, does not appear, but he acted as if it had been entirely devoid of truth. A rare instance of self-possession and self-confidence, looking, not alone to the nature of the intelligence conveyed, but to the source from whence it came.

About two o'clock the French renewed the attack, and till six the conflict was severe. At every point the assailants were repulsed, and again victors and vanquished rested upon their arms. But a sad accident befell. The dry grass and shrubs with which the plain was covered, caught fire, and many wounded men, unable to crawl to a place of safety, perished amid the conflagration.

## CHAPTER X.

MOVES AGAINST SOULT—ACROSS THE TAGUS—IN LISBON—IN  
CADIZ—ACROSS THE TAGUS AGAIN.

SIR ARTHUR had won a great battle, but his circumstances were scarcely improved by it. Upwards of 6000 British troops had been placed *hors de combat*; and though the loss of the enemy was still more severe, and though 3000 magnificent British infantry arrived in his camp just as the firing ceased, he could not venture, associated as he was with the Spaniards, to follow up his success. Joseph and Victor were thus enabled to retire unmolested from the field, the former pushing off for Madrid, which Sir Robert Wilson was reported to have threatened, the latter halting upon the left bank of the Alberche. Hence the armies which had fought on the 27th and 28th, continued to face one another on the 30th, and so remained till rumours came in, which led to a change of dispositions on the part of the English General.

I have elsewhere described the plan of campaign that was drawn up by Sir Arthur and accepted by the Spaniards. It broke down in every part. Venegas loitered by the way. Cuesta left the pass of Baños unguarded. Sir Robert Wilson failed to effect all that he had promised, and neither supplies nor means of transport were forthcoming. The evil consequences were made apparent first in the paralysis which fell upon the victors of Talavera, and next in the execution of certain movements by the enemy, which, had they been a little more prompt, might have led to serious results. Mar-

shal Soult, after refitting at Lugo, advanced, as we have seen, to Salamanca. There the junction of Ney's corps, of which Mortier was in temporary command, put him at the head of 35,000 men, whom he moved leisurely, and with needless precaution, through the unguarded pass of Baños into the valley of the Tagus. On the evening of the 2nd of August, Sir Arthur heard of this movement. He held a conference with Cuesta, in which, after receiving the Spaniard's lame excuse for neglecting to occupy the pass, it was arranged that Cuesta should remain in Talavera to guard the wounded, while Sir Arthur with his English troops countermarched to engage Soult. All this was done under the persuasion that Soult's force was, as the Spaniards represented it to be, barely 14,000 or 15,000 strong. For an encounter with 35,000, Sir Arthur was not prepared, particularly under circumstances which might at any moment bring Victor and Joseph upon his back.

Sir Arthur set out upon his bold enterprise on the morning of the 3rd. He reached Oropesa the same day, and there, for the first time, heard the truth respecting the enemy's strength. He was in a terrible scrape, and he knew it. If Soult could only secure the bridge over the Tagus at Almaraz, and Victor were to fall upon the Spaniards, and disperse them, his own chances of covering Lisbon, or even of saving the troops of which he was at the head, would be small indeed. If on the other hand he could get before Soult, break down the bridge and guard the fords, his retreat by Arzobispo into Estremadura, and through Estremadura into Portugal might be made good. It was an occasion which called for all the promptitude to decide, and the vigour of action, of which he was the master—and he did not fall below it. Though not unaware that Soult's advanced guard was considerably nearer than his own to the point in question, and that while the French followed a well-made road, the English would be obliged to scramble through rugged mountain-passes, he directed General Craufurd with the light division to push for Almaraz, while he himself with the rest of the army turned round, and moved upon Arzobispo. Craufurd and his division did their work admirably. They

passed the mountains, came down upon Almaraz, crossed the river, and completed the destruction of the bridge, just as the leading files of Mortier's cavalry appeared in sight. On that side at least the safety of the British army was secured.

Leaving them there, I return to Sir Arthur, who was pursuing his march towards Arzobispo, when he suddenly encountered the whole of Cuesta's troops, hurrying to overtake him. A somewhat stormy interview took place between the two chiefs. Sir Arthur charged Cuesta with again violating his pledges—Cuesta assured Sir Arthur that anxiety, lest the English should be overmatched in their combat with Soult, had alone induced him to quit Talavera. They parted in anger. Sir Arthur would not stay to fight in a position where victory itself could bring no benefit to the cause. Cuesta declared that he would accept battle from Soult, single-handed. But an interval of 24 hours, in which the English made good their progress across the Tagus, sufficed to bring the old man to his senses. He also began, a little too late, his retreat in the same direction, and though he succeeded in getting the mass of his people over, it was by sacrificing his rear-guard, on which Soult fell, and from which he took 30 pieces of cannon.

While the Spaniards were thus mismanaging their affairs, Sir Arthur pursued his own course. He made for Deleytosa, where, during the 7th, 8th, and 9th, the scattered portions of his army re-assembled; and on the 11th he established his head-quarters at Jaraicejo, on the great road through Estremadura towards Badajoz and Lisbon. There he remained nine days, giving time for the Spaniards to come again into communication with him from Deleytosa; and occupying a line, which, with the bridges of Almaraz and Arzobispo broken, and the fords well guarded, was, for purposes of defence, excellent. For his eye was now fixed steadily on Portugal. He expected that the enemy, massing their force, would leave a single corps to protect Madrid, and march with the rest upon Lisbon; in which case he determined to resume the offensive, and to fight a battle at all hazards. Fortunately for him, and perhaps for Europe, the march upon Lisbon which Soult suggested, was not

undertaken by King Joseph. Apparently satisfied with removing an immediate danger from himself, he broke up his army into portions; and Sir Arthur was, in consequence, enabled to fall back at his leisure upon Badajoz, in the villages round about which he placed his wearied troops.

Among all his campaigns perhaps there is not one in which, more remarkably than in this of Talavera, Sir Arthur Wellesley exhibited the several features of his grand military character; his prudence, not to call it deliberation, in preparing; his clear perception of the end to which his operations ought to be directed; his steady, rather than energetic, movements, in bringing them to a head; his skill in the selection of a defensive position; his wisdom in providing, as far as circumstances would allow, against contingencies; and the fortitude and energy with which, having got into a scrape, he managed to set himself free from it and to save his army. The delay at Abrantes was protracted to an extent which he himself deeply deplored. It prevented, beyond all doubt, the execution of the plan on which his heart was originally set. It enabled Victor to escape beyond the Tagus, and threw him back upon his resources. But Sir Arthur was not to blame for this. Indifferently supplied when he began his march against Soult, he found himself, after the campaign of the Douro, all but destitute. His men were naked and shoeless; he lacked horses, mules, and carriages; he was without money, and his hospitals were crowded with sick. So ill indeed was he supported that supplies which ought to have reached him from Lisbon in a few days, did not come up for a fortnight. He heard also of reinforcements both of cavalry and infantry in the river, yet week after week passed by and they failed to make their appearance. At last he was compelled to move without them, trusting to the promises of the Spaniards for rations, which he had no means of carrying for himself. A less cautious commander would have probably made this move earlier; and it is possible that, without suffering more, he might have succeeded by a march up the right bank of the Tagus, in placing Victor between two fires. But this, looking to the sort of force with which he was

about to co-operate, is by no means certain. Cuesta's army, as Sir Arthur soon discovered, was little better than a rabble. It could neither advance nor retire, except with precipitation; it was incapable of executing the simplest manœuvre in an enemy's presence. Had Cuesta brought it close to Victor's rear, and Victor turned upon it, the dispersion of the Spaniards would have been certain. And thus Sir Arthur must have found himself, with less than 20,000 men, in the air. Still there is no denying that his halt at Abrantes was too much prolonged, and that opportunities escaped him, in consequence, which never came again. But granting this, we grant all that in the campaign of Talavera can be asked for as a fault. His progress afterwards was as rapid as circumstances would allow; and his arrangements were excellent. Had the battle which he was anxious to fight been fought on the 23rd, Cuesta would have been in Madrid two days afterwards. And failing this, Wellesley's determination not to go beyond the position of Talavera was most judicious. Of his conduct during the trying days of the 26th and 27th it is unnecessary to speak. Cool, calm, self-possessed, he inspired everybody round him with perfect confidence, insomuch that among the troops, left as they were by the Spaniards to starve, not a murmur was heard. And finally, if in facing round upon Soult he exhibited more of courage than of prudence, let it never be forgotten, not only that Soult got into his rear, through the misconduct of those who ought to have barred the way against him, but that, in order to cloak their own blunders, some of these, in their reports to head-quarters, greatly understated the strength of the corps which had threaded the defile of Baños. As soon as he knew the truth Sir Arthur's proceedings were as vigorous as wisely conceived. It was a master's hand which pushed Craufurd through the mountains on Almaraz. It was the inspiration of genius which led to the oblique march upon Arzobispo, the descent by the left bank of the river and the occupation of Deleytosa and Jaraicejo. And when we further bear in mind, that the Spanish army was not only of no use, but a positive hindrance to him all the while, that the inhabitants as he



passed along hid their provisions, and drove away their animals, we find ourselves at a loss which to admire the most,—the endurance of the men so circumstanced who kept together, in a state well nigh of starvation, or the skill and energy of their leader, who brought them out of such a complication of difficulties without losing a gun or leaving a single straggler behind.

The position which Sir Arthur had taken up near Badajoz enabled him to watch two points, both of the greatest importance. He was there upon one of the great roads to Lisbon which passes through Estremadura, and he could easily cross the Tagus and place himself on the other, should the enemy make his approach by the left bank of the river. At the same time he covered Cadiz, in which the central Junta, driven out of Madrid and Seville, had taken refuge. He retained that position therefore throughout the remainder of the summer, notwithstanding the malaria which infects the valley of the Guadiana, and the large amount of sickness, which partly on that account, partly as the natural result of over-exertion, fell upon his army. He availed himself likewise of his proximity to Lisbon and to Cadiz, and set off, as soon as the approach of winter freed him from the immediate apprehension of being molested, to visit both cities. The ostensible business which carried him to Lisbon was to confer with the English Minister, and to press forward the recruitment and better organization of the Portuguese levies. His real object was to select some position, the fortification of which might render the Portuguese capital secure; or, if the worst came, would enable the British army to withdraw unmolested from Portugal. For the state of Europe had painfully affected the minds of public men at home, and even he, resolute as he was, could not regard it with indifference. While therefore, in reply to questions addressed to him from London, he continued to assure the Minister that the game was still alive in the Peninsula, he considered it necessary to provide against every possible contingency, and to make such arrangements as should at once strengthen his hold upon the country, and enable him at any moment to quit it without loss or dishonour. It was under such circumstances,

and with a view to the accomplishment of such objects, that the famous lines of Torres Vedras were marked out. And though the work went forward many months, Portuguese peasants executing what English engineers designed, so well was the secret kept, that neither in the French army nor in the English did any rumour get afloat that arrangements of the sort were in progress.

Having settled this point to his own satisfaction, he returned to head-quarters, and after an interval of two days departed for Cadiz. Hitherto his brother, Lord Wellesley, had been accredited to the Spanish Government. He was now, in consequence of certain changes in the English administration, about to take charge of the Foreign Office at home, and the political views of the brothers being generally in accord, both felt that a personal interview would be desirable. They met accordingly, and the public service benefited for awhile by what then passed between them. Nor was it with Lord Wellesley alone that Sir Arthur held confidential communication. The members of the Spanish Government waited upon him singly and in a body, and received, with apparent respect, the advice which he offered; and the advice which he offered was indeed worthy of all acceptance. He cautioned them against entertaining schemes of aggressive warfare. He pointed out that troops so imperfectly disciplined as theirs were unfit for the operations into which they were hurried, and could never be rendered efficient till time was taken to organize and drill them in positions comparatively safe. The chiefs of the Spanish Government appeared to be struck with the reasonableness of all his suggestions. They conferred on him the rank of Captain-General in the Spanish army. They fêted him in public and in private, and applauded to the echo the speech delivered in good Spanish, wherein he acknowledged the vote of thanks passed in his favour by the Junta. But they did not cast dust in his eyes for a moment. "You'll see what comes of all this," he observed to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as they came away together from the meeting,— "these people will continue to believe that they are superior to the French; they will persist in fighting great battles as

they have heretofore done, and one after another their armies will be destroyed."

It was at this time that Sir Arthur's brilliant services received their first public recognition at the hands of the Sovereign. He was raised to the British Peerage as Viscount Wellington of Wellington in Somersetshire. But the gratification thence arising was a good deal dimmed by the tidings of disaster which soon afterwards came in. The Spanish Government, which applauded while he spoke of defensive warfare, entered immediately on his departure from Cadiz on an offensive campaign. An attempt was made to reconquer Madrid, which ended in the defeat and dispersion of all the Spanish corps engaged in it. The consequence was that the whole course of the Tagus became uncovered, and Lisbon lay open to an attack against which he was unable from his position on the Guadiana to protect it. He broke up without hesitation and crossed the Tagus at Abrantes. There he stationed General Hill to observe the roads through Alemtejo, and to afford some show of protection to Badajoz; while he himself took post in Beira, having his left in Guarda, and his right in Viseu. Finally, the light division was thrown forward under Craufurd into the valley of the Coa, with orders to watch the course of the river, but to avoid unnecessary risks; on no account to be drawn into a battle, and to fall back when seriously threatened.

## CHAPTER XI.

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN—FALL OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND ALMEIDA—BATTLE OF BUSACO, RETREAT TO THE LINES.

IN order to convey something like a correct idea of the nature of the struggle in which Lord Wellington was engaged, it will be necessary to interrupt for a moment the flow of my narrative, and to describe in few words how the belligerents stood in regard to the numbers and dispositions of the corps gathered under their respective standards.

The Spaniards, beaten everywhere, and re-assembling only to be dispersed again, could not show a muster-roll of more than 70,000 men in the whole. Twelve thousand were at Medellin in Estremadura, under the Duc del Albuquerque; 24,000, the remains of Ayerzago's corps, had come together at La Carolina; 20,000, or thereabouts, fugitives from del Parque's action on the Tormès, were at St Martin de Trebejo, among the mountains of Sierre de Gaeta; and 6000 or 8000 with General Mahy, at Astorga and Villa Franca. Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz both contained adequate garrisons, and commanding the great roads through Estremadura and Beira, were, in the existing aspect of affairs, of the first importance. But these several Spanish corps, besides that they lay wide apart, had all, with the exception of Albuquerque's, suffered recent defeats. They were all in consequence too much demoralized to be depended upon for active operations, either offensive or defensive. Meanwhile the Portuguese army was fallen into a state well nigh of inefficiency. The campaign of the previous summer

had shaken its discipline; the men were in rags, and their equipments terribly out of gear. About 15,000 of them who had latterly been in observation near Ciudad-Rodrigo, suffered so much from the refusal of the Spanish authorities to afford supplies, that it was found necessary to withdraw and send them to the rear. Hence the only force on which reliance could be placed was the British army, of which not more than 16,700 infantry and 2800 cavalry were really effective. With these, as has just been explained, Lord Wellington posted himself with his right in Guarda, and his left towards the Douro. His advanced guard lay in the valley of the Coa, and General Hill, with an infantry division 4400 strong, remained at Abrantes, on the Tagus.

Looking next to the French, we find that they were in a condition to open the campaign with five well-appointed and highly-disciplined army-corps, not including Joseph's guard and the reserve. Soult, with 12,000 men, lay at Talavera, Sebastiani, Victor, Mortier, the Guards, and the reserve, were disposed about Madrid, and along the Tagus. They numbered in all about 65,000 men, and were, so to speak, in Lord Wellington's immediate front. But in addition to these, Ney was in Old Castile, with 32,000 men; Augereau in Catalonia, with 30,000; while Junot, with 27,000 more, was on his march through France towards the Pyrenees. He reached and crossed the mountains in January, 1810.

Here were odds enough against the British General, but more remains to be told. The campaign of Wagram had ended the war between France and Austria. Napoleon's marriage with the Archduchess seemed to secure him against further molestation on the side of Germany, and he was free at any moment to throw the whole military power of the empire into Spain. The British Government, on the other hand, had paralysed itself, and destroyed the finest army that ever quitted the English shores, amid the marches of Walcheren. Had the 40,000 men which composed that army been sent, as common sense might have suggested, to reinforce Lord Wellington, not the campaign of Talavera alone, but the war of which it was an episode, might have taken quite a different turn. But common sense entered

little in those days into the military policy of Great Britain. Distrusting themselves, and harassed by an active opposition, the King's ministers were with difficulty dissuaded from abandoning the Peninsular contest altogether; indeed it was only the firmness of Lord Wellington which saved his country from that disgrace. To their inquiries, repeated over and over again, whether he believed it possible to maintain himself in Portugal, now that Spain was virtually conquered, his answers were on every occasion the same. "Give me such support as you can afford; men, guns, stores, and above all, money. Leave a fleet of transports in the Tagus to guard against the worst, and I will undertake to make my footing good; and if I can't do this, depend upon it that I will, when the proper time comes, bring off the army without loss and without discredit."

The Duke's despatches are before the world, and all who read may understand how entirely upon him rested the burden of maintaining this most arduous struggle. And the struggle, be it remembered, was for a far higher issue than the mere deliverance of the Spanish Peninsula. It was the last effort of Europe to make head against a tyranny before which, up to that moment, principalities and powers had gone down; and the ebbs and flows which occurred in it, were felt in every town and village throughout the civilized world. A thousand questions arose out of it which Lord Wellington alone was assumed to be capable of answering, and to him appeals were continually made, by all who, for whatever reason, were interested in its results. Had he not been the most methodical, as well as the most industrious, of men, he never could have faced the amount of labour which each new day brought with it. But one of his great qualifications for command, perhaps not the least telling of the whole, was his rare skill in husbanding time. It may be truly said of him, when at the head of an army, that he never wasted an hour. He rose early, wrote letters and despatches till breakfast-time; saw the heads of departments then, and arranged with them the details of the day; then returning to his bed-room continued his general correspondence till two in the afternoon. Unless very hard pressed

with business, he would then get upon horseback, and ride to the outposts, or wherever else he conceived that his presence might be necessary. At six he dined—almost always with guests more or less numerous round him; and at nine, or thereabouts, usually withdrew again to his own room. There he continued at his desk till midnight, discussing all that variety of topics which gives its peculiar interest to his public correspondence; and having done this, he slept. For he possessed the invaluable faculty of throwing off at pleasure anxieties and cares; and at any hour in the day or night, in any attitude, and in any situation, he could sleep when he pleased.

Lord Wellington's constitution was excellent, and he never overtaxed it by excesses. Temperate, rather than abstemious, both in eating and drinking, he had his wits always about him; and without apparent inconvenience could go as many as four-and-twenty hours at a time without tasting food. He knew, however, that such was not the case with men in general, and about no point was he more particular than that his troops should be regularly fed, and their food so dressed as to be at once nutritious and palatable. One of his orders of the day directs that vegetables should be provided for the men wherever that was possible, and that the biscuits served out to them instead of bread should be boiled with their meat.

I shall take occasion to show by and by how, later in the war, he diversified this life of mental toil with field sports. Affairs had not as yet become so settled as to admit of that species of relaxation, but it was a principle with him to keep both body and mind up to their proper mark; and on that account he never omitted to give to each a due measure, both of the relaxation and of the exercise which it required. For the same reason he encouraged among his officers every pursuit which had a tendency to hinder them from becoming indolent. The only restriction which he laid upon shooting was, that gentlemen, fond of the sport, should be careful to pursue it as they would have done had they been in England. They were on no account to invade preserves without first obtaining the leave of the proprietor. They were as little as

possible to injure fences. When the fashion came in of getting up plays and acting them, he gave to it every encouragement, and how he dealt with balls, the reader will learn in due time. All this, it will be observed, befell at times and seasons of comparative repose. When the armies were in the field, marching and fighting gave occupation enough to others, and kept him more continually in the saddle; yet even then his industry never relaxed; his correspondence was enormous.

So passed the winter of 1809-10. Early in the spring the French began to move. The bulk of their force they threw into Andalusia; Joseph, Victor, Mortier, and Sebastiani, all taking part in that expedition. Ney, with Junot close at hand to support him, faced Lord Wellington, while Soult, from his cantonments at Talavera, threatened Estremadura. It was the object of the march into Andalusia to surprise Cadiz, and had the enemy used proper diligence, they would have probably effected that object; but after dispersing the Spanish corps under Ayerzaga, they loitered by the way and so gave time for the Duc del Albuquerque to throw a portion of his army into Cadiz. Meanwhile Ney made such demonstrations as decided Lord Wellington not to risk anything in order to arrest Joseph in his movement. It might be of some importance to the Spaniards to keep the enemy at a distance from the place where their Government carried on its deliberations; but Lord Wellington was fighting the battle, not of Spain, but of Europe, and his only chance of fighting it successfully depended upon his being able to retain his hold upon Lisbon. He paid no attention, therefore, to Albuquerque and Ayerzaga's applications for support, but pressing forward the works at Torres Vedras, and employing upon them every peasant who could wield a spade or a pickaxe, he stood upon the defensive at Beira, waiting till the storm in his own immediate front should burst.

It was a maxim of the 1st Napoleon that war should support itself. Acting upon that principle, French armies everywhere, more especially in Spain and Portugal, took with them into the field only such a stock of provisions as each man was able to carry about with him for his own use. The



practice had undoubtedly this to recommend it, that troops so little encumbered could move with extraordinary rapidity. It had, however, its disadvantages too, and upon the whole these were found generally to overbalance their opposites. Unless the march happened to be triumphant throughout, and the communications of the army with its rear were kept open, the men had nothing to depend upon after their cooked provisions were consumed, except such supplies as the country might afford. These sooner or later failed, and serious privations necessarily followed. Lord Wellington was fully alive to these facts, and upon them he grounded in the main his system of defence. He exacted from the Portuguese Government a promise that in the event of his being obliged to retire, the whole country between Beira and Torres Vedras should be laid waste. The retreat he undertook to conduct so leisurely that time would be afforded for executing that stern purpose. But the purpose itself was on no account to be evaded, the work of desolation must be complete. Not a head of cattle, not a grain of corn, not a morsel of food nor a flask of wine, must anywhere be left for the enemy to profit by. Every mill, likewise, was to be burned down, and every house emptied of its contents. Meanwhile he could so arrange that the enemy should find it as difficult to communicate with their rear, as to go forward; and Portugal would be saved, not more by the resistance offered in the field than by the impossibility of living where all means of subsistence were taken away. Nothing short of what he owed to Portugal and to Europe could have induced Lord Wellington to fall upon this terrible device. It would have been unnatural had either the Portuguese Government or the Portuguese people acceded to it willingly. The latter contemplated with dismay the loss of all which seemed to make life valuable to them; the former urged the commander of their armies to keep the war, if possible, from falling into so hideous a course; and well-disposed was he to act upon the suggestion as long as it was possible so to do. By sending General Hill towards Badajoz, he frustrated the designs of Soult, who had moved from Talavera against that place, and by and by, when Ney took the field, threaten-

ing Ciudad-Rodrigo, he pushed Craufurd and the light division across the Coa, and restrained him. But Napoleon, though kept at home by the attractions of his Austrian bride, did not entirely forget the Peninsula and its requirements. He sent Massena, by far the ablest of his marshals, to assume the command of what was called the army of Portugal, and both sides soon felt and acknowledged the vigour of the band which had undertaken the direction of affairs. It is said of Massena that he accepted the command with reluctance. He had acquired in the Italian wars a great name, which must now be jeopardized; for he dreaded alike the impracticable tempers of his brother marshals, and the renown of Lord Wellington. But he could not decline so important a trust, and he came.

The army of Portugal when Massena assumed the command consisted of the corps of Ney and Junot, numbering between them 57,000 effective men. Its head-quarters were established and a large magazine formed at Salamanca in the month of May, and on the 1st of June it broke up, and moved forward to invest Ciudad-Rodrigo. Great alarm was felt for the safety of that place; and anxiety expressed both by the Spanish and Portuguese Governments, that Lord Wellington should risk a general action in order to prevent the siege. But Lord Wellington knew better than all the world besides what he could and what he ought to do. Calmly, and with the dignity which became his position, he refused to be diverted from his own purposes. He wrote, indeed, to General Mahey, urging him to harass from Galicia the enemy's communications, but he wrote in vain; and he himself advanced as far as Almeida, whence he continued, after the place had been attacked, to throw supplies across the river into Ciudad-Rodrigo. But further than this he would not go. "I should be neglectful of my duty to the King, to the Prince Regent, and to the common cause, if I could permit myself to be influenced by public clamour, or by fear, so as to modify the system of operations which I have adopted after mature deliberation, and which daily experience proves to be the only one which can bring the matter to a successful issue." The writer of this letter looked far be-