

posted there. He therefore collected boats at Pena Cova, and crossed the Mondego, timing this movement so critically, that the next day, when the enemy had passed the Alva at Ponte de Murcella, and occupied Foz d'Arouce and the neighbouring villages, he re-crossed with a regiment of militia and some cavalry at the same place, took post the same evening at St. Andre, and captured some of their marauders there in the act of pillage; being then so near the invading force, that several of their stragglers came dropping in during the night, thinking their comrades were in possession of the place, and did not discover their mistake till they were captured. Early on the morrow he moved on Foz d'Arouce; Drouet's rear-guard had just quitted it; the village had been sacked, and several of its inhabitants of both sexes were lying dead in the streets, victims of those outrages and cruelties which invariably marked the movements of the French in Portugal. Wilson hung upon their flank and rear; and, cutting off their stragglers and marauding parties, which was all that could be done with so small a force, made about an hundred prisoners. Trant also marched from Coimbra with part of the garrison, in the direction of Miranda de Corvo, to harass the enemy, if he should take the Condeixa road; but Drouet, having communicated with the party at Cabaços, who expected his advance, halted at Espinhal, till he received instructions from Massena to proceed with his corps and establish himself at Leyria. Wilson then collected his division, and closed upon his rear, for the purpose of impeding him in that marauding system upon which the whole army depended for subsistence. Their detached parties were then brought in daily contact; a sort of warfare in which the Portuguese were fully equal to their invaders, and in which they had always the great advantage of sure intelligence.

Claparede meantime had moved in the direction of Lamego.

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CHAP. Silveira, giving him the opportunity which he sought, attacked
 XXXV. his advanced guard at Ponte d'Abbate, and was repulsed:
 1810. having thus exposed the comparative weakness of his force and
 his own want of skill, he was in his turn attacked at Villar de
 Ponte, and made a precipitate retreat upon Lamego: the
 enemy pursued him closely; and the Portugueze, with an honourable feeling, when they evacuated the city, carried with them 140 soldiers from the hospital, on their backs; for they had no other means of transport. Silveira then crossed the Douro. Lamego was thus left to the invaders' mercy, and Upper Beira open to their inroads. In consequence of this rashness on Silveira's part, Miller and Wilson were ordered toward the Douro by General Bacellar. Silveira, however, had retreated with such precipitation, that neither time nor opportunity was afforded for co-operating with him; but Bacellar took a position on the Payva, on the enemy's left flank, and Wilson at Castrodre, on their rear. Claparede would willingly have pursued Silveira beyond the Douro, that he might obtain the resources of a province which had not been exhausted; but these divisions were closing upon him, and menacing his communication with Almeida. He returned, therefore, to his position at Guarda.

Rash operations of Silveira.

Conduct of Drouet's corps.

But the country which Wilson had previously occupied and protected was thus left open to Drouet's marauding parties; and no sooner was his removal ascertained, than they were let loose, and carried desolation along the banks of the Alva and to the very heart of the Estrella. No part of the country suffered at this time more dreadfully than that which was exposed to this corps: it was in vain that the miserable inhabitants sought to conceal themselves in the depths of the great pine forest which extends over so large a portion of that sandy region; no recesses escaped the search of men who were impelled by hunger, by cruelty which seemed to have become in them a craving and

insatiable desire, and by a brutal appetite which rendered them even more dreadful and more devilish than their thirst for blood. The number of inhabitants who perished in the diocese of Leyria (one of the smallest in the kingdom) during the four months that the French retained possession there, was ascertained by official enquiries to be not less than 20,000; and a great proportion of these were butchered in the *Pinhal*, or died there of famine, and disease, and wretchedness.

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If Buonaparte had been in all other respects the hero, the philanthropist, and the philosopher, which he is represented to be by men whose understandings seem to be as impenetrable as their hearts, the history of this single campaign would nevertheless stamp his character with indelible infamy. Expecting, what indeed the event proved, that Lord Wellington had not a force with which to act offensively against Massena in the field, he calculated upon the resources of Lisbon, and made no arrangement for supplying the invading troops with provisions in case of any unexpected obstacle to their immediate and complete success. They were left as in Spain, to support themselves how they could; and in the cruelties which such a system inevitably occasioned, the evils of war received their only possible aggravation. After the battle of Busaco this army subsisted entirely upon what it could obtain by plunder. Throughout Portugal the peasantry employ oxen for draught; these fell into the enemy's hands, wherever the orders of the Regency had not been obeyed; and though those orders had met with an obedience unexampled in its extent, from a devoted people, yet there were many who, in hope that the danger might be averted, delayed parting with what it was ruin for them to lose; and thus the French obtained a supply of cattle, which, though it would have been inconsiderable for a British army, was not so for men in whose way of preparing food nothing is wasted. But the supply was not large; because kine are nowhere numerous in

*The French
army left to
subsist upon
the country.*

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that country, where there is little or no use made of their milk, and little demand for their meat; and it was not lasting, because want of bread occasioned a consumption of animal food unusual among the French; for wherever they went they found the ovens and the mills destroyed. They bruised the corn and then boiled it, and they roasted the maize, till with that alacrity and cleverness which characterise the whole nation, they had repaired the demolished mills, and in places where there were none, constructed some of their own devising, turned by an ass at the end of a lever, or by force of arm. The hand mills which soon afterwards made part of their regimental equipments were an invention of Marmont's, suggested probably by the inconveniences which Massena suffered at this time. If the ingenuity with which they thus remedied one of their wants is characteristic, the circumstance is not less so that finding no other fit material for mill-stones they resorted to the churches, and took for that purpose the slabs with which the graves were covered, or the vaults closed!

At first, something like discipline was observed in the marauding parties, and regular detachments with their respective officers were sent on this degrading service; but it was found that these detachments brought home little or nothing, while they who went forth without orders and purveyed for themselves, returned driving before them beasts well laden with the provisions they had discovered; they were soon left, therefore, to take their course, without the slightest attempt on the part of the generals at regulation or restraint; and a system was thus tolerated, . . . not to say encouraged, . . . in which it is even more dreadful to reflect upon the depravity on one side, than the unspeakable miseries which were endured on the other. French writers who were themselves engaged in this accursed expedition have told us that the whole army had at times no other food than what was obtained from hiding-places which the Portuguese

who fell into their hands had been made by torture to discover ; and that acts of this kind were as ordinary a topic of conversation among the soldiers as any other incidents of their campaign ! In excuse for this, they observe, and truly, that the army must otherwise have perished, . . . that they were like starving sailors, when as the only means of prolonging their own lives they kill and eat their comrades, in extremity of hunger. In proportion as this apology, if such it may be called, be valid, is the guilt of that tyrant by whose deliberate orders the army was detained in such a situation ; and inferior only to his guilt is that of the commander by whom such orders were obeyed. Life is what every soldier must hold himself ready to lay down whenever his military duty should require the sacrifice ; but woe to that soldier who acts as if life were all that he had to lose !

The same writers, who by the plea of necessity excuse a system so atrocious that even that plea cannot be admitted without doubt as well as shuddering, tell us also of supererogatory crimes committed by this army for which no motive but that of fiendish wickedness is assignable, no palliation possible. When a family was hunted out among the rocks, woods, or mountains by these hell-hounds, happy were the men who did not endure torments, the women who did not suffer violation, before they were murdered. The French officers, when any of them were made prisoners, endeavoured always to reject the opprobrium of these flagitious and undeniable deeds upon the Italians and Germans in their army : but let us be just to human nature, which has neither made the Italians and Germans more depraved than the French, nor the French than the English. The Italians, indeed, having grown up in a country where great crimes are notoriously committed with impunity, may have been accustomed to regard such crimes with less repugnance than either the Germans or the French. But

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CHAP. French discipline had made all in its armies of whatever stock
XXXV. good soldiers: the first thing needful for moral improvement is
1811. to bring men under obedience, which is the root of civil virtue:
military discipline had done this; had moral discipline been
connected with it as it might and ought to have been, they who
were made good soldiers, if they had not by the same process
been made good men, would have been withheld from any open
wickedness. But this was systematically disregarded in Buona-
partes armies; the more thoroughly his servants had corrupted
their feelings and hardened their hearts, the better were they
fitted for the work in which they were to be employed. Under
like circumstances, British soldiers might have been equally
wicked; but no British Government has ever been so iniquitous
as to place its soldiers in such circumstances. The only offence
deemed worthy of punishment in Massena's army was insubordina-
tion towards a superior. A wretch might sometimes be apprehended
in an act of atrocity so flagrant that it was not possible to let him
escape; but there was no attempt to prevent such horrors, not
even when there was the wish: they were known and suffered, . .
by better minds in despair, by others with unconcern. In such
an army, the soldiers who brought young and handsome women
to the camp, as part of their booty, were considered as humane;
and humane by comparison they were, though these women, . .
whatever their former condition had been, . . were played for as
a stake at cards, were bartered for provisions or horses, and were
put up publicly to sale! It is related, that such women as sur-
vived the first horrors of their situation became reconciled to it,
because of the terror in which they had previously lived, and
because their lives were now secure; that they attached them-
selves to those who became, as it is called, their protectors; and
that it was no uncommon thing for a woman to pass from one
such protector to another, rising a step at every exchange, till
she became at last the mistress of a general!

The skill which some of these marauders acquired in their search for food, resembled the sagacity with which savages track their prey. That they should detect with unerring certainty any place of concealment in a dwelling or an out-house, might have been expected from the habits of plunder which they had been indulged in in former campaigns; but when they were questing in woods, or among rocks, or in the open country, a new sense seemed to be developed in them. There were men in every company who could discover a depôt of provisions by scent far off. Such resources, however, could ill suffice for such an army; and the reinforcements which they received bringing with them no supplies, added as much to their difficulties as to their strength. Wine, which was found in abundance at first, was lavishly consumed while it lasted. Bread failed entirely: and in many corps, the rations of maize were reduced first to a half, then to a third. A third of the whole army was at last employed in thus purveying from a wasted country, and their comrades are described as stationing videttes to watch for their coming, and communicate by signals the joyful intelligence if they came with supplies; for little now was brought back by the most successful marauders, and sometimes the whole produce of such an excursion was consumed before they returned to their quarters. They had found when they entered the kingdom whole towns and villages deserted at their approach; more appalling spectacles were presented now in the recesses to which they penetrated; whole families were seen there, lying dead; or in a state worse than death; and those who were not suffering from famine or disease seemed to be bewildered in mind as well as rendered wild in appearance, by perpetual terror and exposure.

The helpless and the most devoted were they who suffered thus, . . . old men, women, and children; and they who remaining

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*Skill of the
marauders.*

CHAP. to protect wives, children, sisters, and parents, or to perish with
 XXXV. them, forewent for the performance of that duty the pursuit of
 1811. vengeance. Meantime, the greater part of the effective popu-
 lation were actively employed. Every where in the rear of the
 enemy parties of the militia and ordenanza were on the alert:
 and when General Foy, returning from Paris, entered Portugal
 with an escort of 3000 men to rejoin the invading army, Lieu-
 tenant-Colonel Grant, with eighty of the ordenanza, took pos-
 session of a height which commanded a pass near the village of
 Enxabarda, and kept up a fire upon them for two hours, as long
 as daylight served. Above 200 of their dead were counted within
 the distance of four leagues, the inclemency of the weather
 having killed many of the wounded. The invaders were not
 prepared to encounter such severe cold as is sometimes felt
 among these mountains. About three hundred men of Drouet's
 corps were frozen to death during a night march between
 Castello Branco and Thomar. There was a peasant belonging
 to the latter district of great bodily strength, and answerable
 hardihood, who, being deprived of his former peaceful occupa-
 tions, took up in its stead that of destroying Frenchmen, that he
 might live by spoiling them as they did by spoiling others; this
 man is said to have killed more than thirty of the enemy, during
 the month of February, with his own hand, and to have re-
 covered from them about fifty horses and mules, which, with
 other booty, he carried to Abrantes for sale. He continued to
 carry on this single-handed war as long as they remained in the
 country; and became so well known by his exploits that the
 French set a large price upon his head; but he was in no
 danger of being betrayed by his countrymen, and too wary to
 be entrapped. A cave in the mountains was his usual abode.
 Some of the wretched inhabitants from the adjacent parts took
 refuge near him, and felt themselves comparatively secure under
 his protection.

*Feldzug von
 Portugal,
 p. 66.*

Small parties from Abrantes cut off some 300 of the enemy during the two first months of the year. In one of these desultory affairs, which were all that occurred, while the two armies were waiting anxiously, each with its own views, Captain Fenwick, a most enterprising young officer, who commanded at Obidos, and had been engaged more than twenty times with the French foraging parties, received a mortal wound near Alcobaca: he was pursuing with some Portuguese recruits a party of fourscore French, when one of them, as he was within a few yards, turned round and shot him through the body. He had so won the confidence and good will of the peasantry, many of whom he had armed with French musquets, that they not only brought him the best information, but were ready under his command to face any danger. No man could have been more regretted for the excellent military qualities which he had displayed, and the expectations which were formed of him. The only other affair deserving of notice occurred at Rio Mayor. General Junot made a reconnoissance thither from Alcanhede in considerable force, having learned that there were stores of wine and corn in the town. The piquet which was stationed there retired. Junot rashly galloped into the town, and a soldier of the German hussars waited for him and brought him down. But though this robber left some of his blood upon that earth which had long been crying for it, the wound was not fatal, the ball having lodged between the nose and the cheek bone. A box of topazes which he designed as a present for Marie Louise, was intercepted by a party of the Spanish army in Extremadura, who with rare disinterestedness, foregoing all right to the prize, delivered it to the government. There were seventy-three stones, valued at 3250 dollars: as it was not possible in such times to discover from what churches or what family they had been plundered, the Spanish government dis-

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