

defer the assault till the following day, and meantime endeavour to break the curtain between the Trinidad counterguard and an unfinished ravelin. Fourteen guns opened upon this curtain at daylight; in two hours the walls were brought down, and by four so practicable a breach, as it appeared, was formed, that the assault was ordered for ten o'clock that night. The attack was to be at three points: that of the castle by escalade; those of the Trinidad and S. Maria bastions by storming the breaches. The castle was to be assailed by the 3rd division under Major-General Picton; La Trinidad by the 4th under Major-General Colville, and Santa Maria by the left under Lieutenant-Colonel Barnard. At the same time, S. Roque's was to be assaulted by a party from the trenches, and the 5th division to alarm the enemy by threatening the Pardaleras and the works towards the Guadiana.

Meantime the French were indefatigable in preparing for defence. They imputed it as a gross fault to the British engineers that they had not destroyed the counterscarps, an operation which there was no time for performing, even if it had been possible to perform it without men more accustomed to such labours than any in the allied army: but because this had been impossible, the enemy were enabled to form at the foot of their counterscarps, and behind the breaches the most formidable obstructions which destructive ingenuity could devise. Night and day they were employed in clearing away the rubbish, destroying the ramps of the covered way, and making retrenchments behind the trenches. The fallen parapets were replaced with fascines, sand-bags, and wool-packs; casks filled with tarred straw, powder, and loaded granades, were arranged along the trenches, and large shells with them. Immediately in front of the breaches at the foot of the counterscarp, sixty fourteen-inch shells were placed in a circular form, about four

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CHAP. yards apart, and covered with some four inches of earth, and
 XL. a communication formed to them with powder hoses placed
 1812. between tiles in the manner of mine-tubes. *Chevaux de frize*
 April. were formed of sabre-blades; .. all the artillery stores were
 turned to account; even a large boat was lowered into the ditch
 and filled with soldiers to flank one of the breaches, where it
 was of great use.

An extraordinary circumstance, which might be called accidental, contributed greatly to the terrible effect of these formidable preparations. The Spaniards at some former time intending to have strengthened Badajoz, had commenced their improvements, as usual with them, upon a great scale, and, as usual also, left them unfinished. Thus they had so greatly widened the ditch as to include within it the covered way and part of the glacis of the original trace; designing to build a ravelin to this front, this old glacis and covered way in the space which was to be occupied by that work were not removed, and they remained in the ditch like an ill-shapen rock. The interior of this being the old counterscarp, the front of it, where it had been cut down to admit of building the new one, was very steep and difficult of ascent. The light and 4th divisions, at the hour appointed, entered the covered way without difficulty; bags of hay were then thrown down, and ladders placed down the counterscarp: they descended readily, and the ditch was presently filled with men. The 4th division, which was on the right, mistook these old works in the ditch for the breach, cheered each other up, and mounted with alacrity; but when they had reached the summit they found themselves there exposed to the fire of the whole front, with a difficult descent before them, the space between them and the foot of the breaches appearing like a deep ditch; there were in reality very deep excavations in many parts of it, sufficiently extensive to prevent an indiscriminate rush forwards:

and water had been introduced along the counterscarp, by means of which all approach to the breach either in the face or curtain was precluded, except by passing over the seeming rock, between which and the foot of the breach the space was so restricted that a body of men could advance in only a very small front. The night was very dark, and this it was felt would render any confusion irremediable; but confusion presently arose, for the engineer who led the light division was killed before he got to the ditch, and being the only person who knew the way to the breach which they were to have assaulted, they were directed too much to the right, got upon the same summit where the 4th stood hesitating and perplexed, and thus the confusion was increased, and both crowded towards the great breach, instead of taking each its own. They had only five or six ladders to descend by, which could take only four at once, and this close under the main force of the garrison, selected and placed there as at the post of danger, and most of them having three spare muskets, with people to load them in the rear as fast as they could be discharged. The assailants were so thickly crowded on the glacis and in the ditch, that it was not necessary to aim at them; but fire-balls were cast among them, which effected the double mischief of increasing their confusion, and rendering all their movements as distinctly visible as if it had been noon-day; the oldest soldiers declared that they had never before been exposed to so rapid and murderous a fire. Major-General Colville fell among the first, severely wounded in the thigh, . . the last sound which he heard before he fainted was the voice of Captain Nicholas of the engineers, exhorting his men in the ditch. That young and excellent officer, whose charge it was to lead the 4th division to the breach, after twice essaying to reach the top, fell wounded by a musket which grazed his knee-pan, a bayonet thrust in the great

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CHAP. muscle of his right leg, his left arm broken, and his wrist
 XL. wounded by musket-shot; . . yet, in that state, seeing his old friends
 1812. and comrades, Colonel Macleod and Captain James, fall, and
 April. hearing the men ask who should lead them to the third onset, he
 rallied, and ordered two of his men to bear him up in their arms.
 Two brave fellows attempted this most perilous service; they
 had just reached the top when one of them was killed, and
 at the same moment, Nicholas received a musket-ball, which
 passed through the chest, breaking two of his ribs upon the way,
 upon which he fell from the top to the bottom of the breach mortally
 hurt, and receiving further injury from bruises in his fall.

Never were brave men exposed to slaughter under more
 frightful circumstances. The breach would not admit of more
 than fifteen abreast: the assailants repeatedly reached the sum-
 mit, though the slope was covered with planks full of spikes.
 There they found the entrance closed with *chevaux de frize*
 which it was neither possible to break down nor to cut away,
 nor to get over. Many gashed their hands in attempting to
 pull them down at the muzzle of the enemy's muskets, from
 which a new species of shot, which the soldiers called musket-
 grape, was poured in upon them in one continuous discharge;
 . . it consisted of slugs fastened together, and resembled grape-
 shot in miniature. Under this incessant fire, shells, hand-
 grenades, bags of powder, and every destructive form of missile
 or combustible that ingenuity could invent, were hurled into the
 ditch. Gunpowder, it is said, had never, since the hour of its discovery,
 been employed with more terrific and terrible effect. The explo-
 sions frequently created a light more vivid than broad day, which
 for a moment was succeeded by utter darkness, . . and then
 again the whole ground seemed to be vomiting fire under their
 feet and every where around them, while they had no possible
 means either of defending themselves or of retaliating. The

officers led their men so close to the enemy's guns, that they felt the wadding as well as the ball ; when one fell another took his place : but as it had been impossible to recover from the first confusion, the men could not be moved like a machine in collective strength ; individual efforts were all that could be made, and these, though made with devoted courage, were necessarily vain, the best and bravest putting themselves forward, and sacrificing themselves ; till at length the troops, knowing it hopeless to make any farther effort, and yet too high spirited to retreat, stood patiently in the ditch to be slaughtered. It was not till more than two hours after the commencement of this carnage, that Lord Wellington, being made acquainted with their situation, ordered these two divisions to be withdrawn and to be formed a little before daylight for a fresh assault. He might well indeed conclude, that after the blood which had already been shed there, success was to be purchased at any cost ; and certainly there would have been much more chance of success in the second attempt than in the first, when it might be made in good order, and when the enemy's trains had been fired, and their combustible preparations expended.

This might probably have been his determination, if no advantage had been obtained in any other part ; but immediately before he gave this order, he received intelligence, that the 3rd division was in possession of the castle. Major-General Kempt, who led this attack, was wounded in crossing the river Rivellas below the inundation, a fire having been opened upon them from the whole of the eastern works, as soon as they reached that stream. It was General Philippon's intention, if the breaches should be forced, to retire into the castle, which had the strength of a citadel : with this and the *tête-du-pont*, and Fort Christoval, he might yet have held out some days, and give time thereby for those movements which he supposed would again be

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CHAP. made for his relief. With this view he had strengthened and
XL. stored it ; all its gates had been built up, and the ramparts were
1812. covered with large Spanish shells, stones, beams, and whatever
April. could be thrown upon the heads of the assailants. By means of
these preparations, a most obstinate resistance was opposed to
the escalade, and for a considerable time all who attempted to
rear the ladders were destroyed. At length an entrance was
forced up one ladder at an embrasure ; the defence immediately
slackened, and other ladders were quickly reared, with that alacrity
which the feeling of success inspires. An officer of the German
Legion, Girsewald by name, who was remarkable for his bodily
strength, was one of the first who mounted. A French soldier
fired at and missed him, then made a thrust with the bayonet ;
Girsewald, with his left-hand, parried the bayonet and seized
it, and held it so firmly, that the exertions which the Frenchman
made for recovering his weapon, assisted him in mounting, till
he got high enough to aim a blow in his turn, with which he
severed his antagonist's head from his shoulders. A false report
having been made to Philippon that one of the bastions had
been entered by the assailants, the falsehood of that intelligence
made him doubt and hesitate when he heard they were escalad-
ing the castle. Two companies which he intended to order thi-
ther, by some mistake either in giving or understanding the order,
went to the breaches instead, where they were not wanted ; and
four others, which took the right direction, arrived too late : the
castle had been taken ; they were received by a heavy fire of
musketry, and dispersed with loss. One of the last shots which
were fired struck Girsewald on the knee ; he would not let the
limb be amputated, and therefore the wound proved fatal.

The 5th division were not less successful, though the party
with the scaling ladders lost their way, and Lieutenant-General
Leith could not, in consequence, move till it was after eleven

o'clock. The bastion of S. Vicente which he attacked was fully prepared for defence, and the troops were discovered when on the glacis; yet they forced in by escalade. Major-General Walker then advanced along the ramparts to fall on the rear of the enemy who were defending the breaches; the troops, when driving the French before them, were opposed by a single field-piece placed on the *terre-plein* of the curtain; the gunner lighted a port-fire as they approached: at the sudden blaze of light, one who was among the foremost in pursuit cried out "a mine!" That fearful word ran through the line of pursuers; the very men who had so bravely won the bastion, as if their nature had been suddenly changed, took panic, and in spite of their General's efforts, who was severely wounded while endeavouring to rally them, were driven back by the bayonet to the place whereat they had entered: but by this time the reserve had formed there, the pursuers in their turn were checked, and the British marched immediately to the breaches, from which the defenders then dispersed, seeing that all was lost. This attack might have been spared if any signals had been agreed upon by which Picton's success should have been made known; for want of such concertment, General Leith's attack was made after the escalade had succeeded; he met with the same opposition as if the fate of the place had not been decided in another quarter, and thus Badajoz may be said to have been twice carried that night. Philippon with his staff retired into Fort Christoval, and surrendered in the morning.

The place was plundered during the remainder of the night and on the following day, nor could order be restored till the day afterwards. The doors were forced by firing through the locks, and most of the inhabitants had placed a table immediately in the entrance of their houses, with a candle and a bottle of brandy, supposing that this would content the soldiers: the consequence

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Col. Jones's
Sieges, 303.

CHAP. was that, excited as they already were, they became half mad
 XL. with the fiery spirit. But whatever excesses they committed,
 1812. their excitement took the form of good fellowship toward their
 April. defeated enemies; and they were seen walking about with the
 French soldiers, arm in arm, inviting them to drink, and taking
 every care of them. As soon as fresh troops could be brought
 up from the corps of observation, they were marched in, and
 order was then restored. 59 officers and 744 men were killed
 on the night of the assault; 258 officers wounded and 2600
 men; the total number of killed and wounded during the siege
 was 5000. The garrison consisted of nearly 5000, of whom
 about 3500 were made prisoners.

*Soult ad-
 vances to re-
 lieve the
 place... and
 retreats.*

On this occasion the French Marshals had been less alert than during the former siege, and they had not acted so well in concert. Marshal Soult left Seville on the first, with all the force he could collect. On the 4th he reached Llerena; and having arrived at Villa-Franca, two marches only from Badajoz, on the 8th, he there learned that the city had been taken on the night of the 6th. The inhabitants reported, that his chagrin at this intelligence was manifested in fits of intemperate anger, and that he broke nearly all the plates and dishes within his reach. Before daylight he commenced his retreat; the allied cavalry immediately followed his march, and on the 11th, attacked his rear guard (consisting of General Drouet's cavalry, 2500 in number) at Usagre, and drove them to Llerena, killing many, and bringing away about 150 prisoners, and nearly as many horses. It was believed throughout this part of the country, that Ballasteros had entered Seville; and the people giving, with their characteristic credulity, implicit belief to the idle rumour, made rejoicings every where for the supposed success, and seemed wholly to disregard the recapture of Badajoz.

If Ciudad Rodrigo had been provisioned at this time as it

ought to, and as Lord Wellington expected it would have been, his intention was immediately after the capture of Badajoz to have advanced upon Seville with 40,000 men; that movement would instantly have raised the siege of Cadiz, and Soult might probably have been obliged to withdraw from Andalusia, and take up a defensive position on the Tagus. But the British Commander's operations were still crippled by the insufficiency of his means; the Spaniards were not to be relied on for any exertions however necessary for their own deliverance; the Portuguese were paralysed by the poverty to which the government and the nation were reduced; and the British ministry were not yet sufficiently encouraged by success and by popular opinion, to increase their efforts and therewith an expenditure already unexampled in amount. Marshal Marmont, meantime, supposing that Soult would be able to raise the siege of Badajoz, thought the opportunity favourable for an attempt upon the Beira frontier. Lord Wellington had foreseen this, and had little means of providing against it. Relying, however, upon the officers whom he had left in command at Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, for all that could be done by vigilance and sound judgement, he had directed General Bacellar to collect the Portuguese militia corps and march thither, . . . Sylveira to protect the Tras-os-Montes, and Brigadier-Generals Sir Nicholas Trant and Sir John Wilson to cover that part of Beira extending from the Douro along the Coa to Sabugal, with especial orders to look to the safety of a considerable magazine of ammunition at Celorico. Bacellar fixed his head-quarters at Lamego; the two Anglo-Portuguese Brigadiers had about 3500 men, but only a single squadron of dragoons between them, and but a small proportion of the men had served with them in the former campaigns. In Portugal, the militia is a service in which no man willingly either enters or continues, for they receive only half the pay of

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*April.**Marmont
enters
Beira.**Arrange-
ment for
the defence
of that
frontier.*