

CHAP.
XLI.
1812.

July.

in front, supported in reserve by the 6th and 7th under Major-Generals Clinton and Hope, and D. Carlos d'España's Spanish division; Brigadier-General Pack, with the 1st and 16th Portugueze regiments, was to support the left of the 4th division, by attacking the hill which the enemy held. The first and the light divisions occupied the ground on the left of the Arapiles in reserve.

As soon as the formation was effected, the attack commenced from the right. Major-General Pakenham moved along a valley at a quick rate, crossed the extended left of the enemy, almost before they were aware of his intention, drove them back in confusion and overthrew every thing before him. Brigadier-General D'Urban's Portugueze cavalry and Lieutenant-Colonel Hervey's squadrons of the 14th, supported him in the most gallant style, defeated every attempt which was made upon his flank, cut in upon the enemy's broken infantry, and put numbers of them to the sword. The attack in front was made with equal ardour: the fifth division had been exposed for about an hour to a continued and heavy cannonade; no orders were ever more welcome to the soldiers who were stretched on the ground to avoid its effects, than those which bade them advance against the enemy. The distance was more than a mile, up a steep height crowned by twenty pieces of cannon, and their left had to pass through the village which formed a considerable obstruction; they advanced in perfect order, not firing a shot till they had gained the summit, from whence the guns which had annoyed them were hastily withdrawn, nor till they had received the fire of the enemy, who were formed into squares to resist them. When they were within some thirty yards the word was given to fire and charge; this instantly threw the squares into disorder; the heavy cavalry coming up on the right increased their confusion; they fled then, and in their flight fell in with the remains of their extreme left, flying before Major-General Pakenham's division.

Lieutenant-General Leith was severely wounded in the act of breaking into the squares. Pakenham and the cavalry constantly bringing up their right, so as to outflank the points on which the French attempted to make a stand, drove them from one height to another and made above 3000 prisoners. The 4th and 5th divisions acquiring in like manner strength upon the enemy's flank in proportion as they advanced, carried height after height, till at length the enemy's left rallied on their centre; and on the last height, after its crest had been gained, one division of their infantry charged Cole's division, which, after a severe contest, in which Cole was wounded, gave way.

This temporary success was owing to the failure of Pack's attack upon the Arapiles; it was bravely made, but the Portuguese failed to carry it against the disadvantage of such strong ground; the attempt, however, was not without some good effect, for it occupied troops who would otherwise have been engaged against General Cole in his advance, and who were not now at leisure to oppose him, till, notwithstanding this temporary success, it was too late. Beresford, who happened to be on the spot, directed a brigade of the 5th division which was in the second line, to change its front, and bring its fire on the enemy's flank; while thus engaged he was wounded. Three British generals had thus been disabled, and in a most successful charge against a body of infantry, Major-General Le Marchant was killed, at the head of his own brigade. Lord Wellington now ordered up the 6th division under Major-General Clinton. That division marching under a heavy fire deployed at the foot of a hill, and beginning then to fire regular volleys, suffered severely as it advanced; it was vigorously attacked by a body of cavalry which had been concealed behind the Arapiles, and for some minutes the contest appeared doubtful; but when Clinton was enabled to form his two right batta-

CHAP.
XLI.

1812.

July.

CHAP.
XLI.
1812.

July.

lions into line, and charge, the French again lost heart, and abandoned the important point which they had till then maintained. Their right still resisted, having been reinforced by the troops who now withdrew in good order from the Arapiles, and by those who had fled from the left.

They re-formed and took up their ground with equal promptitude and skill almost at right angles to their original front, the infantry along the crest of the hill in line, supported by heavy close columns in reserve, the cavalry in masses on their flanks, and the artillery posted at the advanced knolls, so as to sweep the whole face of the height. The 1st and light divisions were ordered against these, with two brigades of the 4th to turn their right, while the 6th supported by the 3rd and 5th attacked the front. Clinton advanced up the rocky and steep height in line, without firing a shot, and under a murderous fire of musketry and artillery: but he charged with the bayonet, drove them from a commanding conical eminence, and captured two guns. Their flank was attacked at the same time; and then, beaten at all points, they fled through the woods towards the Tormes, cavalry, infantry, and baggage all mixed together. The defeat was complete, and so would have been the destruction, if darkness had not opportunely covered their flight. Lord Wellington, with the 1st and light divisions, and Major-General William Anson's brigade of the 4th, and some squadrons of cavalry under Sir Stapleton Cotton, pursued them towards Huerta and the fords of the Tormes, as long as any of them could be found together; but night soon put an end to the pursuit, and enabled great numbers who had been taken prisoners to escape. A sentinel mistook Sir Stapleton Cotton in the dark for an enemy, fired, and wounded him.

This memorable battle, which lasted from three in the afternoon till ten at night, took place within sight of the city; the

ground with its heights rising gradually one behind another, forming, as it were, a fine theatre for such a spectacle. On the part of the allies, nearly 5000 were killed and wounded. General Le Marchant's loss was greatly regretted: he was a native of Guernsey, who having served in the light dragoons under the Duke of York, in the years 1793 and 1794, applied himself with zeal and ability to the study of his profession, introduced the Hungarian sword exercise into the British army, and drew up a manual for the use of the cavalry, which was published by the war-office. The royal military college was in great measure planned by him; he was appointed lieutenant-governor of that institution, and discharged the duties of the office till 1811, when he could no longer retain it, being promoted to the rank of Major-General. He then joined the army in Portugal in command of a brigade, but had not been long in that country, when the unexpected death of his wife rendered it necessary that he should return to England for the arrangement of his domestic affairs: that mournful business having been performed, he rejoined the army, and shortly afterwards fell, being in the 47th year of his age. His eldest son, who was an ensign in the guards, was at his side when he fell. The Prince Regent manifested with proper munificence his sense of General Le Marchant's worth, by granting a pension of £300 to that son, £100 to each of three younger sons, and £120 to each of his five daughters... The loss of the French was very great; besides the dead and wounded, they left 7000 prisoners on the field. Eleven guns and two eagles were taken: it is said, that more than ten were captured, but that there were men base enough to conceal them, and sell them to persons at Salamanca, who deemed it good policy as well as a profitable speculation, to purchase them for the French. Marmont was disabled early in the action, Bonnet also was wounded, and the command then devolved upon

CHAP
XLI.

1812.

July.

CHAP. General Clausel, who was wounded also, but not so as to in-
 XLI. capacitate him. Generals Ferey, Desgraviers, and Thomieres
 1812. were killed.

July.

At break of day, the pursuit was renewed with the same troops, and with Major-General Bock and Anson's brigades, which had joined them during the night. The first and light divisions were ordered to the ford of Huerta, Lord Wellington having supposed that the enemy must make their passage there, because the castle at Alba de Tormes was occupied by the Spaniards; but the troops who garrisoned it had, without his knowledge, been withdrawn, so that Clausel, making a most rapid march during the night, crossed the river there without molestation. Having crossed in pursuit, the cavalry came up with the enemy's rear-guard of horse and foot between Garci Hernandez and Peñarandilla: a detachment from the 11th and 16th dragoons charged their cavalry, which fled, and left the infantry to their fate. Major-General Bock, then, with the heavy brigade of the King's German legion, attacked them, when posted upon a hill in square, and in what is described as one of the finest charges that was ever seen, rode completely through them. The whole body, consisting of three battalions, were made prisoners, the brigade losing in the charge 30 killed and nearly 50 wounded. In the course of the day, the enemy were joined by 1,200 cavalry belonging to the army of the north, who, though too late to be of any greater service, covered the retreat of their centre to Peñaranda de Bracamonte: one column went by Macotora; the other which had crossed the Tormes at Encina and Huerta moved on El Campo and Cebolla. They had their head-quarters at Flores de Avila, ten leagues from the field of battle, for a few hours on the second night, and hastened from thence by Arevalo, towards Valladolid. Their dead were found in many places by the roadside, and their stragglers met with as little mercy from the

peasantry as they had been accustomed to show; yet many of their rear-guard who were taken were without arms, having thrown them away as impediments in their flight.

CHAP.
XLI.

1812.

July.

The pursuit was continued on the 24th; but the enemy made exceedingly long marches, and had little to encumber them while hastening to their resources both in men and means, and the pursuers having to bring up their supplies far from behind could not keep up an equal pace. On that day they only came up with the rear-guard, which hastened away at their approach. On the following the advance halted for the army to close up; Colonel Arentschild's brigade entered Arevalo; and a non-commissioned officer's patrol captured two officers and 27 men of Joseph's own cavalry, in Blasco Sancho, between Arevalo and Avila. The Intruder had reached that place, hastening with the army of the centre to join Marmont upon the Tormes; he was met there with tidings of the defeat, and then turned toward Segovia, as if retreating upon Madrid: soon however receiving fuller advices, he endeavoured to divert the pursuers by threatening an advance upon their flank. The routed army, meantime, whose movements were conducted with great ability by Clausel, concentrated themselves on the right bank of the Douro, between Puente de Duero and the other bridge at Tudela de Duero; they crossed the river as soon as the allies advanced towards them, hastened to Valladolid, and making no tarriance there, continued their retreat to Burgos. Lord Wellington entered Valladolid on the 30th amid the acclamations of the people. There he discontinued the pursuit, and prepared to march against the Intruder, with the intention of either bringing him to action, or driving him from Madrid.

Meantime, a squadron under Sir Home Popham which sailed

CHAP. from Coruña, to co-operate with the Guerrillas, and occupy
 XLI. the enemy upon the side of Biscay, rendered all the service
 1812. which had been expected from it. Sir Howard Douglas and
 General Carrol embarked in the Venerable with Sir Home.
 They arrived off Lequeitio on the 18th of June, where the
 French had possession of a hill-fort, commanding the town, and
 strong enough to resist any body of infantry; they had also
 200 men fortified in a convent within the town, and into this
 the garrison retired when the Pastor D. Gaspar Jauregui ar-
 rived with his party to act in concert with the squadron. The
 convent might have been destroyed by the ships, but the town
 must in that case have suffered also; it was determined, there-
 fore, to attack the fort, which was so situated that the enemy
 thought it quite inaccessible to cannon. They knew not what
 British seamen are capable of on shore. At a time when the
 sea broke with such violence against the rocks at the foot of the
 hill, that it was doubtful whether a boat could reach the land,
 Lieutenant Groves succeeded in landing a gun there. It was
 hove up for a short distance by a moveable capstan; but this
 was too tedious an operation, and it was dragged to the summit
 by six and thirty pair of oxen, 400 of the Pastor's men, and
 100 seamen, headed by the Honourable Captain Bouverie. It
 was immediately mounted; the first shot was fired at four in
 the afternoon, and so well was it served, that by sunset a
 practicable breach was made. The Guerrillas volunteered to
 storm; they were repulsed in the first attempt, but succeeded
 in the second, and such of the enemy as escaped on the opposite
 side got into the convent. In the course of the evening the
 sea had abated, a landing was effected upon the island of S.
 Nicholas, from whence the convent could be battered without
 damage to the town; three carronades were planted there; at

*Proceedings
 of Sir
 Home Pop-
 ham on
 the coast of
 Biscay.*

July.

dawn, a 24-pounder was brought to the east side of the town, within 200 yards of the convent, and another was in the act of being landed upon the island to bombard it, when the French commandant beat a parley, and surrendered with 290 men. The Guerrillas had lost 50 in killed and wounded, not a man belonging to the squadron was hurt. The muskets, stores, and three small guns which were found there were given to the Pastor. Two 18-pounders in the fort were rendered useless; the fort itself was demolished and the convent blown up. The next morning a column of 1100 men was seen which had arrived within two leagues of Lequeitio, but hearing from the peasantry that the English had disembarked 2000 men, they retired. Some intercepted letters were now transmitted to Sir Home, by which the commandant at Guernica was instructed to prepare rations for a French general and 2600 of the Imperial Guards.

The squadron was now to have co-operated in an attack upon Bilbao, but the wind proved unfavourable for getting round Cape Machichago, and part of the ships fetched the anchorage of Bermeo. The enemy had retired from that place, leaving a small magazine of provisions in a fortified convent; these were distributed to the poor; and the battery on the hill and all the fortified places which the French had occupied were destroyed: the works at Plencia were in like manner demolished, and the batteries on each side of the inlet below the bar of the Ybeyzabal, or Narrow River, the beautiful and tranquil stream which forms the port of Bilbao: on one side were the castle of Galea, and the batteries of Algorta and Begona; on the other the batteries of El Campillo, Las Quersas and Xebiles. Early on the following morning some parties of the enemy entered the destroyed batteries of Algorta, but retired upon the squadron's making a disposition to stand up the inlet; they then formed in the plain, and were found to consist of

June 23.

June 24.

CHAP. 2000 men at Algorta, while 400 were sent to Puerta Galetta.
 XLI. Three of the British sloops closed with the fort there, silenced
 1812. it, and drove them from thence. It was supposed that this was
 the corps for which rations had been ordered at Guernica, and
 that it had been thus drawn off from its original destination.

July 2.

The squadron then made for Guetaria; two companies of marines were landed for the purpose of reconnoitring the place, previous to an intended attack, but the Guerrillas who were expected to co-operate were engaged with the enemy in a different quarter; parties of the French were seen crossing the hills; the intention, therefore, was relinquished, and the marines re-embarked without loss. Sir Home then sailed for Castro,

July 6.

where Sir George Collier had landed a company of marines to assist Longa in a concerted attack. Longa was there at the time and place appointed; more marines were landed, and guns with hearty exertions of well-directed skill were drawn up heights that might have seemed inaccessible to men less earnest in their duty. They were placing them in a battery to the east of the town, when 2500 of the enemy appeared on the heights of S. Pelayo; the parties upon this were re-embarked, and Longa found it necessary to change his ground, after which he sustained an action, in which no advantage was gained over him. Somewhat disheartened by this, the French marched into the town that evening, and were driven out of it on the morrow by the fire of the squadron: they then took post on the hills, and under favour of the night retired towards Laredo. The castle then surrendered with 150 men, and having been put in a state of defence, was garrisoned by the marines and Spanish artillery-

July 10.

men of the Iris. Their next attempt was a combined attack

July 11.

upon Puerta Galleta, which was abandoned because the enemy were found to be in greater strength than had been expected; the French on their part failed equally in endeavouring to re-