

allow them to be at peace, and is desirous of forcing them to submit to his yoke; and they must not forget that the worst of the evils suffered by the enemy in his profligate invasion of Spain and Portugal have been occasioned by the irregularities of the soldiers and their cruelties, authorized and encouraged by their chiefs, towards the unfortunate and peaceful inhabitants of the country. To revenge this conduct on the peaceable inhabitants of France would be unmanly and unworthy of the nations to whom the commander of the forces now addresses himself; and at all events would be the occasion of similar and worse evils to the army at large, than those which the enemy's army have suffered in the Peninsula, and would eventually prove highly injurious to the public interests.

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General orders, July 9, 1813.

Though it was not possible to act on the offensive upon a great scale, till Pamplona should have surrendered, Lord Wellington determined with the left wing of his army to cross the Bidassoa, and dislodge the enemy from some strong ground which they occupied on the right of that river as an advanced position; the key to it being the high steep mountain called La Rhune, which fronts the passes of Vera and Etchalar. Mount La Rhune is a remarkable spot; and its possession had been obstinately contested in the campaign of 1794, because its summit served as a watch-tower from whence the whole country between Bayonne and the Pyrenees might be observed. The mountain itself is within the French territory, but there is a chapel, or, in Romish language, a hermitage, on its summit, which used to be supported at the joint expense of the villages of Vera in Spain, and of Sarré, Ascain, and Urogne, in France; people of different nations, and hostile feelings, being there drawn together by the bond of their common faith... The right of the army being at Roncesvalles and Maya, could at any time descend from its commanding situation into France.

Passage of the Bidassoa.



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The Bi-
dassoa.

The Bidassoa, a river not otherwise remarkable than as forming the boundary of two great kingdoms, rises on Mount Belat, flows down the valley of Bastan, and, spreading into a broad stream after it has passed Irun, enters the Bay of Biscay between the Point of Figueras (a rocky promontory in which Mount Jaysquibel terminates) and the heights on the French side. Mount Jaysquibel, which extends along the coast from Passages to this point (its highest elevation being about 1700 feet) is separated from the chain of the Pyrenees by a broad valley, along which the Vittoria road passes; at its foot stands the old and melancholy town of Fontarabia, . . . a name which Milton has made familiar to English ears; the river rising sixteen feet there, and forming a tide harbour, washes the ruins of its walls, which were blown up in the war of 1794; but when the tide is out there is a considerable extent of sand on both sides of the stream. The little town of Andaye, famed for its brandy, is on the French shore opposite. The bridge which the enemy had destroyed in their retreat is about a mile from Irun, and a little below it is the Isle of Pheasants, better known by its later name from the Conference held there in 1660, which brought in its consequences so many evils, not upon Spain alone, but upon the greater part of Europe. Between this island and the mouth of the river three fords had been discovered: Spanish fishermen had been employed in this service, and they performed it so well, as if pursuing the while their ordinary occupation, that the French sentries on the opposite bank never suspected their intent.

Attack of
the French
position.

A stronger position as to all natural advantages can hardly be imagined than that which the allies were to attack, after they should have crossed the Bidassoa; the French had strengthened it by redoubts, by *abattis*, and intrenchments at every knoll; the paths were hardly practicable; it was laborious work even

for an unarmed man to reach points which were now to be assailed in the face of an enemy perfectly prepared. But it was necessary to advance from a country where the nature of the ground rendered it difficult to support the troops; and where supplies for many of the corps were carried to the mountain encampments on the heads of men and women, long strings of whom were to be seen toiling up the steep and slippery ascents. Preparations for the attack were made on the 6th, and the troops were under arms and in motion soon after midnight. The tents were left standing, that the enemy might discover no signs when dawn appeared of the intended movement. It was a stormy night, with thunder and lightning, and some rain, . . . the rain not enough in any way to impede or increase the difficulties of the attempt, and the storm in other respects favouring it; for it moved in the same direction as the troops, and prevented the enemy from hearing the noise of the artillery and pontoon train. The storm was succeeded by an extraordinary sultry heat, what little wind there was feeling like the breath of an oven. The 1st and 5th divisions, with Wilson's Portuguese brigade, were to cross the river in three columns below, and one above, the bridge, and carry the French intrenchments about and above Andaye; and General Freyre, with the Spaniards, was to cross in three columns at the higher ford, and turn the enemy's left by carrying their intrenchments on the Montagne Verte, and on the heights of Mandale. The troops arrived at their appointed stations without having been noticed; and every thing thus far had been so fortunately performed, that the enemy did not begin to fire till the heads of the columns were nearly half over, when a rocket was discharged from the steeple at Fontarabia, as the signal for the simultaneous advance of the troops above.

Every thing succeeded perfectly. The 5th division was the

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CHAP. first that set foot on the French soil ; they advanced under a
 XLV. brisk fire from the enemy's piquets, against the line which was
 1813. hastily forming on the nearest range of hills. The first came
 presently up, and the enemy were driven from the works. Freyre was equally successful on his side ; the Spaniards rushed down the mountain, forded the river, and carried the Montagne Verte. The affair began at 8, and at 9 it was seen that the huts of the mountain post had been set on fire and abandoned. Meantime Baron Alten, with the light division, and with Longa's, attacked and forced the intrenchments on the Puerto de Vera ; and Giron, still farther on the right, attacked their position on Mount La Rhune. The light division drove them from redoubts, and intrenchments, and abattis, such, in the words of a distinguished officer then present, " as men ought to have defended for ever ;" and the Spaniards, in like manner, carried every thing before them, till they reached the foot of the rock on which the hermitage stands, which on that side presents a craggy cliff, though on the other it is accessible by a gentle slope. Even that post the Spaniards made several attempts to carry by storm, which failed only because it was impossible to ascend there ; the enemy, therefore, remained in possession of the hermitage that night, and of a rock on the same range of mountains with the right of the Spanish troops. In all other parts the firing had ceased early in the afternoon, here it was kept up till late at night ; and the conical outline of the mountain was seen far and wide by the light of this awful illumination. Some time elapsed on the following morning before the fog cleared away sufficiently for Lord Wellington to reconnoitre Mount La Rhune, the prominent mountain there, towering above its neighbours ; he perceived that it was least difficult of access on its right, and that the attack might advantageously be connected with that on the enemy's works

*Batty's
 Campaign
 in the
 Western
 Pyrenees,
 p. 28.*

in front of the camp of Sarré. Accordingly, he ordered the army of reserve to concentrate to their right: Giron at the same time attacked the post on the rock, and won it most gallantly; his troops followed up their success, and carried an intrenchment upon a hill which protected the right of the camp: the enemy immediately evacuated all their works in order to defend the approaches to their camp, and these posts were occupied by detachments which Lord Dalhousie sent from the 7th division through the Puerto de Etchalar for this purpose. Giron then established a battalion on the enemy's left upon Mount La Rhune. Night, opportunely for the enemy, prevented farther operations; they retired under cover of the darkness both from the hermitage and the camp, and the allied armies pitched their tents in France. The British loss in these two days was 579 killed, wounded, and missing; that of the Portugueze 233; that of the Spaniards 750. Sir Thomas Graham, having thus established within the French territory the troops who had so often been distinguished under his direction, resigned the command to Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope, who had arrived from Ireland the preceding day, and departed himself to take a command in the Low Countries. As soon as the left of the allied army had made this important movement, the enemy moved General Paris's division from Oleron to the neighbourhood of St. Jean de Pied-de-Port, and on the night of the 12th they surprized and carried a redoubt in front of the camp of Sarré, taking prisoners a piquet of forty Spaniards, and one hundred pioneers. The redoubt was farther from the line, and from the ground from whence it could be supported, than Lord Wellington had supposed when he gave orders for occupying it; he left it, therefore, now in their possession. On the following morning they made an attack upon the advanced posts of the Andalusian army, hoping to regain the works

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CHAP. which they had constructed in front of the camp ; but they were
 XLV. repulsed with little difficulty.

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The country which was now occupied by the contending armies had been well disputed in the years 1793 and 1794, during the heat of the French revolution, and men whose names afterwards became conspicuous served at that time in both armies : Mendizabal and the high-minded Romana among the Spaniards ; among the French, Latour d'Auvergne ; Moncey, one of the few French marshals who brought no reproach upon himself by rapacity or cruelty ; and Laborde, who will be remembered in Portugal for both, and for having been the first French General whom Lord Wellington defeated. In that war the Spaniards fought with the manifold disadvantage of having a wretched administration, an ill-disciplined and worse provided army, and a revolutionary spirit showing itself in some of their own countrymen ; yet they made a longer and sturdier resistance in the Pyrenees than the French displayed when it was now their turn to defend the passes and protect their own country from invasion. But, honourable as it was for the armies of England, Portugal, and Spain thus to have driven the enemy from Lisbon and Cadiz to the Pyrenees, and pursued him into his own territories, the spirit in which that invasion was undertaken was not less honourable to the allied nations than the success of their arms. The French, indeed, as soon as they apprehended that their own country must soon become the seat of war, spoke with horror of what might be expected from the Portugueze and Spaniards, remembering then with uneasiness, if not with shame and remorse, the atrocities which they themselves had committed. Their hope was that the peasantry would rise, and carry on that kind of war which within the Peninsula had been found so destructive to the invaders ; and no endeavour was omitted for exciting them to such a course. But a circumstance

had happened to check this spirit upon its first manifestation, a few days before the passage of the Bidassoa. The Portugueze, when they surprized and took a French piquet on the side of Roncesvalles, were fired at by the peasantry : they took fourteen of them, and these men were immediately marched to Passages, there to be embarked for England as prisoners of war. This treatment had the effect of intimidating the people, while it awakened no spirit of vengeance, because it was perceived to be nothing more than what was strictly just. That spirit might have been roused if Lord Wellington had not by timely severity effectually checked the license which the troops were but too ready to have taken, and from which it had not been possible to protect the Spaniards in the Pyrenean valleys. The French peasantry did not forsake their houses when the allies crossed the Bidassoa. The inhabitants of the large village of Urogne did not leave it till the battle approached, and then they collected in an adjoining field ; but they dispersed as soon as flames broke out among their dwellings ; for the troops who entered it began to plunder . . they set several houses on fire, and drank to such excess that, had the enemy been on the alert, he might easily have captured or destroyed them. Some of the officers were more culpable than the troops, for they used no exertions to prevent the outrages which they saw. Lord Wellington, as soon as he was informed of this misconduct, republished his former orders, and accompanied them with a severe reprimand, declaring his determination not to command officers who would not obey his orders, and of sending some of them who had been thus grossly unmindful of their duty to England, that their names might be brought under the notice of the Prince Regent.

It was now seen how much the moral conduct and character of an army depends upon its general. Lord Melville once made the

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monstrous assertion in Parliament that the worst men were the fittest for soldiers. His strong understanding should have taught him better, if his heart had failed to do so ; and he was properly rebuked for it by the Duke of Gloucester, who observed, that the men who had the strictest sense of their personal duties were those who served their country with most patience and most fidelity in war. But Mr. Windham's hope of recruiting our armies with men of a better description than those who used to be forced or inveigled into it, or driven by desperation to enlist, had not been realized, and the want of moral and religious training was still left to be supplied by military discipline . . . as far as that could supply it. Lord Wellington enforced that means ; and it is not the least of his many and eminent merits, that he made such means effectual, without bringing upon himself any reproach for undue severity. After the excesses at Urogne, not an inhabitant was to be seen in the French territory ; they had withdrawn more because of these outrages, than in obedience to the injunctions of their own government. But a proclamation was issued in French and Basque, assuring them that their persons and property should be respected. Some necessary examples of justice upon those who ventured to violate orders so emphatically repeated convinced the inhabitants that they might trust to the word of the British general ; and, after those examples had been made, never, perhaps, since the days of the great Gustavus, was such excellent discipline observed in an enemy's country. Even the Portugueze and Spaniards, whom it might have been thought almost impossible to restrain from giving way to that desire of vengeance which had been so wantonly, cruelly, and insolently provoked, obeyed the injunction of the great commander who had beaten their invaders out of Portugal and Spain, and

demeaned themselves with such good order and humanity, that the French often said their own armies were the foes whom they dreaded.

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Two pontoon bridges, and one bridge of boats, were laid over the Bidassoa immediately after the passage had been effected; and works were thrown up to strengthen the position, in which Lord Wellington now waited for the surrender of Pamplona, that he might advance with his whole strength. That city, the modern capital of Navarre (Olite, now a miserably decayed place, was the ancient one), was the great bulwark against the French on that side. Lord Wellington trusted to a sure blockade for reducing it. Its wells supply it abundantly with water; and it was provided with a corn-mill, the largest in existence of its kind, to be worked by hand or by horses, and setting in motion four or five grindstones of such dimensions, that four-and-twenty loads of wheat could be ground by each in a day. When corn began to fail for this well-constructed mill, and there was little prospect of relief after the failure of Soult's great effort in the Pyrenees, the governor made a bold attempt to obtain subsistence from the very force which blockaded him: he sent to Don Carlos d'España, requiring him to furnish 7000 rations daily for the inhabitants of the city, whom, he said, he could no longer afford to feed. Don Carlos, who knew that the French general had, with characteristic effrontery, included his troops in this estimate, replied, that, unless the inhabitants were fed as well as the garrison, while any food lasted, he should hold the governor responsible for their treatment, and would strictly inquire into this when the place should be surrendered, as it must. When the stores were nearly exhausted, it was reported and believed that the enemy intended, as they had done at Almeida, to blow up the works, and endeavour to effect their escape: the

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Pamplona
is surren-
dered.