

CHAP. with the 3rd division and Major-General Bock's Portuguese
 XLVI. brigade, attacked them there, dislodged, and drove them through
 1814. the vineyards and through the town. The allied army then
 assembled at Vic Bigorre and Rabastens, and the enemy
 retired during the night upon Tarbes.

March.

Further re-
 treat to
 Toulouse.

Buonaparte had rested in this city on his way to Bayonne in 1808, when the treachery which he had plotted for the usurpation of Spain was about to be consummated: a monument had been erected here in commemoration of this imperial visit; and now that journey had in consequence brought thither a victorious enemy's army. So different, too, were the feelings of the inhabitants toward him from what they had been, that when Soult sent General Maransin thither before him to raise a levy *en masse* throughout the department, they refused to take arms. Here, on the morning of the 20th, the French were found, having the advanced posts of their left in the town, their right upon the heights near the windmill of Oleac, and their centre and left retired, the latter upon the heights near Angor. The allies marched in two columns from Vic Bigorre and Rabastens; and Lord Wellington directed Sir Henry Clinton, with the 6th division, to turn and attack their right, through the village of Dour, while Sir Rowland attacked the town by the high road. Sir Henry's movement was completely successful: Baron Alten, also, with the light division, drove the enemy from the heights above Orleix; and when Sir Rowland had moved through the town and disposed his columns for the attack, they retired in all directions. The troops ascended the position which had been thus relinquished, thinking to pursue their advantage; but having gained the summit, they unexpectedly discovered a large portion of Soult's army, formed on a parallel height of great strength, and the body which had retreated before them, about 15,000 in number, ascending to join their comrades.

This new position could not be attacked without incurring severe loss ; and to preserve the advantages which had been obtained, it was necessary that the corps from Rabastens should move further forward. But before this arrangement could be completed, the evening closed, and Marshal Soult, once more taking advantage of night to cover his movements, retired toward Toulouse. There are two roads from Tarbes to that city, by S. Gaudens, and by Auch ; Soult retreated by the first, but having collected his troops at S. Gaudens, crossed the country from thence to Auch. He had previously sent off all his remaining incumbrances ; and marching with all possible celerity, that he might profit at Toulouse by the time which he gained upon his pursuers, and destroying the bridges as he went, he entered that city on the 24th, having suffered no other loss during the pursuit than that of some prisoners, taken by General Fane in an attack upon his rear guard at S. Gaudens on the 22d.

Once more Lord Wellington's operations were impeded by heavy and continued rains ; he had to carry with him a pontoon train, as well as most of his supplies ; and it was not till three days after the French army had entered Toulouse, that the allies halted on the left of the Garonne, opposite that city. On the following day, Lord Wellington ordered a bridge to be laid at Portet, a village immediately below the junction of the Ariège, and above the city. The current was so rapid, that the sheer line could not without much difficulty be stretched across ; and when this was effected the distance was found to be twenty-six yards more than the pontoons would cover. It was desirable to obtain a passage above the city ; for in that case Soult must either abandon Toulouse, or lose the hope of being joined by Suchet, now, though late in his movements, on the march to join him ; . . . a tardiness not imputable to that skilful commander, but to the unwillingness with which Buonaparte consented to

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*Passage of
the Ga-
ronne.*

March 27.

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 XLVI. failure of the first attempt, a place was found near Roques,
 1814. where the river was not too wide, and the spot in other respects
 favourable; here, therefore, the pontoons were laid down, and
 Sir Rowland's corps crossed, and seized the bridge over the
 Ariege at Cintegabelle; but after an anxious trial of some
 hours, it was ascertained that from thence to Toulouse there
 was no way passable for an army; and that till finer weather
 should have hardened the roads, it would be impracticable to
 direct an attack from the upper side of the town. The corps
 therefore re-passed the Garonne; and it then became Lord
 Wellington's object to bridge the river below the city, and
 attack Soult in front before he should be reinforced. A
 favourable bend in the stream was discovered about two miles
 above Grenade, at a point where the Garonne skirts the main
 road: here some flanking batteries were established before day-
 break on the 4th; but owing to some accidental delay, it was
 five o'clock before the first pontoon was brought to the water's
 edge. A few of the enemy's cavalry were patrolling on the
 right bank, and their whole army was within a short march:
 the patrols retired, and it was expected every moment that
 some attempt would be made to oppose the passage. Marshal
 Soult, indeed, had assured Suchet that whenever the passage
 should be effected, he would march and give the allies battle,
 whatever might be the disproportion of his force; but of this
 he thought more wisely when the time came, and his whole
 attention was now engaged in strengthening a position so
 advantageous in itself, that with the labour and skill now em-
 ployed in fortifying it, he thought he might there safely defy
 even such an enemy as Lord Wellington. The river at this
 point was 127 yards wide, and exceedingly rapid; the bridge
 however was finished in four hours; and just before it was

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March 31.

April 4.

Suchet,
Pièces Jus-
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completed the day became beautifully fine. The right bank is some fifty feet high, the other considerably lower; and on that side there was a plain of open wood, after a rise of about twelve feet. A few men had previously been sent over in small boats and posted in this wood. The cavalry passed in single files, the infantry by threes, the bands playing "British Grenadiers," and the "Downfall of Paris," . . . not knowing that at that time Paris had indeed fallen, and the allied sovereigns were in possession of it. Unopposed as the passage was, it had the appearance rather of some festival display, than of an actual military operation; the people from the neighbouring villages had by this time collected to behold it, . . . with so little fear or dislike were the allies regarded by the inhabitants; and when the horse artillery crossed, the peasants volunteered their aid, and pulled the guns up the bank with all possible alacrity.

The more concerned spectators were not without fear for the bridge; it had been made fast by four stays to trees on either side, but the strength of the current was such that it was soon forced into the shape of a bow. Marshal Beresford passed with three divisions of infantry and some cavalry; but when Freyre's Spaniards and the light division should have followed, the river had increased so much in height and strength, that it was necessary to take up the platform. During the night, it rose two feet; the rain had also recommenced; and on the morrow the centre pontoon was removed, as a measure of precaution, and at length the whole were taken up. The army was thus divided, the main body being still on the left bank, and Soult, if he had thought proper, might have attacked either flank; but he had suffered severely for such an attempt in the battles before Bayonne, when he was more confident, and in greater strength.

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*April.**Toulouse.*

The extent of Toulouse is disproportionately large with respect to its population, being in length from north to south about two miles, and a mile and quarter in breadth from east to west; while the inhabitants were computed at not more than 60,000. It has little commerce, though most favourably situated for inland communication; but it flourished as a provincial capital: formerly it was second only to Paris in size. The houses, and even the cathedral, are built of brick, which is very unusual in France: the latter edifice, therefore, though remarkable for its magnitude, is neither beautiful nor grand; for a structure composed of such mean materials can produce no impression of grandeur, unless it be like the pyramids in size. That cathedral boasted of possessing the bodies of no fewer than seven Apostles, one of them being a duplicate of Santiago. The Dorade church derived its name from a gilt image of Notre Dame, the reputed work of St. Luke, who is better known in Roman Catholic countries as an artist in this line, or as a painter, than by his Gospel. The Dominicans exhibited a less doubtful relic in their church, the body of St. Thomas Aquinas, authenticated by himself in ghostly person, and brought to that city, after numerous adventures, with 10,000 lighted tapers, and 150,000 people in procession. Devout or curious persons were formerly indulged by a sight of the head, which had been fitted to a half-body of silver; upon opening a plate at the top, the real skull was to be seen, and, under circumstances of special favour, kissed by adoring lips. Few places in France afford more subject for reflective thought. It was the capital of a great Gothic kingdom, till the last of its Kings was overthrown by Clovis. The pulpit is still preserved there from which St. Bernard preached the crusade. Poetry flourished there in those ages when it stood most in need of patronage and culture; and the city, under its own Counts, was then the seat of religious liberty as well as of literature. Its

Floral Games may still remind us of the Gay Science of the Troubadours ; but the freedom of opinion and the truths of religion for which Toulouse made so heroic and so virtuous a stand were succeeded there, as in the Catholic Netherlands, by that victorious bigotry of the deepest die which eats into the soul ; and, down to the revolution, a festival was yearly observed there in commemoration of the destruction of the Albigenses. That name must ever bring with it painful reflections to an Englishman's mind, when he remembers the history of a papal crusade under an English leader : and, looking to much later times, never were blind superstition and legal iniquity seen in such accursed combination as here, in the case of Calas ; never, in human history, was a judicial murder accomplished with circumstances of such peculiar barbarity and injustice, . . . circumstances so monstrous, that they could not be believed, if it were possible to deny or doubt them.

Marshal Soult had retreated upon Toulouse less for the sake of the abundant supplies which it afforded him, than because of the singular advantages that its situation offered as a defensible position. The canal of Brienne (so called after the Cardinal Archbishop of that name), and which is broad enough for several barges to lie on it abreast, connects the Garonne with the great canal of Languedoc about two miles from the town, the navigation of the river being impeded in that part of its course by a weir for the use of the corn-mills. The whole western side is protected by the river ; on the east and north the canal covers it ; and on the south, the only part which was not covered by the river, could be approached only by roads impassable for artillery, and was therefore so secure, that Soult, who omitted no means of defence, deemed it wholly unnecessary to erect any works on that side. There were formerly three bridges over the Garonne : the single one which

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Soult's position there.

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is left connects the city with the Fauxbourg S. Cyprien; and the enemy had fortified that suburb with strong field-works in front of the old walls. The walls were high, thick enough for defence in old times, and flanked by towers. The communication across the canal was covered by *têtes-de-pont*, defended by various buildings which had now been fortified for that purpose, and by artillery from the walls. East of the city is a range of bold heights extending along the space between the canal and the river Ers; over these heights all the roads from the eastward pass, and here Marshal Soult had taken his position, having fortified the summit with five redoubts, with various lines of intrenchment to support them, and to connect the flanks of the ground with the defences of the town. The left and centre being the points which he considered most assailable, were thus strengthened; toward the right, where the line approached the Ers, the river itself was sufficient defence. He flattered himself that his determination to defend Toulouse had astounded Lord Wellington, because four days elapsed after the passage of the river, and the allies had undertaken nothing. But the bad weather, he said, might have occasioned this delay; and, expecting an attack, not without an ominous feeling of its result, he wrote to Marshal Suchet, saying that, in case of being compelled to retire, he should draw nearer to him, and that it would be for the advantage of both, if Suchet would make a diversion by the shortest line upon the Upper Garonne.

Formidable as this position was, it was necessary to attack the enemy there; Lord Wellington had no alternative, the roads from Ariege being impracticable for artillery, and even for horse. On the 8th, the stream had subsided enough for the pontoons to be again laid down; the head-quarters then, and General Freyre with the Spanish corps and the Portuguese artillery, crossed the Garonne, and immediately moved forward

to the neighbourhood of the town. Colonel Vivian, with the 18th hussars, had here an opportunity of attacking some cavalry, which, though superior in number, they drove through the village of Croix d'Aurade, taking about 100 prisoners, and pursuing them so closely, that they had not time to destroy the bridge over the Ers, the only one which had been left standing, and by which it was necessary to pass in order to attack the position; Colonel Vivian was severely wounded in this charge. That attack was designed for the following day; but Sir Rowland's corps was on the left of the Garonne, in front of the suburb S. Cyprien; the pontoon bridge was too far off for that ready communication which might be required during the action; orders were therefore given for moving it a league higher up, near Ausonne. Some unexpected difficulties occurred in laying it; it was not completed till after midday, and the attack was, therefore, deferred till the following morning, being Easter Sunday: long will that Easter be remembered at Toulouse!

Lord Wellington's arrangements were that Marshal Beresford, who was on the right of the Ers with the 4th and 6th divisions, should cross that river at the bridge of Croix d'Aurade, gain possession of the village of Montblanc, and march up the left of the Ers to turn the enemy's right, while the Spaniards supported by the British cavalry should attack their front. Sir Stapleton was to follow the Marshal's movements with Lord Edward Somerset's brigade of hussars; and Vivian's brigade, now under Colonel Arentschild, was to observe the enemy's cavalry on both banks of the Ers, beyond the left of the allies. On the lower part of the canal, Picton and Baron Alten, with the 3d and light divisions, and the brigade of German cavalry, were to threaten the *tête-de-pont*, and so draw the enemy's attention to that quarter; and Sir Rowland was to do the same on the side of S. Cyprien.

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*April 10.
Battle of
Toulouse.*

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The business of this dreadful day commenced about seven o'clock, when Sir Thomas Picton drove in the French piquets in front of Pont Jumeau, at the point where the canal de Brienne joins that of Languedoc; the action became warm here, and the enemy retiring, set fire to a fine large chateau, in the cypress avenues of which they had sought in vain to cover themselves. To the left of this division, the light division extended nearly to the road to Alby, by which road Freyre's army advanced, in two columns, and formed in front of Croix d'Aurade, near a hill on which Lieutenant-Colonel Arentschild's Portuguese guns, protected by General Ponsonby's brigade of cavalry, were advantageously placed to cover their movements. Marshal Beresford, with the 4th and 6th divisions, under Sir Lowry Cole and Sir Henry Clinton, advanced also by the Alby road, turned off to their left at Croix d'Aurade, toward the village of Montblanc, carried the village, and proceeded up the left bank of the Ers, in three open columns, along the foot of the heights, over difficult ground, which was much intersected with deep ditches and hollow roads. Upon their march they were exposed to a heavy cannonade from all the guns of the enemy's works; and those guns throughout the day were served with great spirit and correctness, Toulouse having been an artillery school since the Revolution. Beresford's artillery was left at Montblanc because of the badness of the roads; it was posted there on some low ground, in front of the village, and kept up a fire upon the works on the heights of Pujade. The Spaniards advanced in good order to assault these works, which formed the left of the enemy's position, and which Clausel and Villatte occupied with their divisions, having a brigade of cavalry in their front. They advanced across the valley with great bravery under a most severe fire: a brigade of their own