forces, having *interior lines of communication*, could, as long as the Belmonte road was sealed, concentrate in time behind the Alva, or in front of Coimbra. Hence it was on the side of the Alemtejo that danger was most to be apprehended, and it behoved General Hill to watch vigilantly and act decisively in opposition to General Reynier. For the latter, having necessarily the lead in the movements, might, by skilful evolutions and rapid marches, either join the sixth and eighth corps before Hill was aware of his design, and thus overwhelm the allied divisions on the Mondego; or drawing him across the Tagus, furnish an opportunity for a corps from Andalusia to penetrate by the southern bank of that river.

In these dispositions the English General had regard only to the enemy's actual situation, and expecting the invasion to be in summer, but in the winter season the rivers and torrents being full, and the roads deteriorated, the defence would have been different; fewer troops would then suffice to guard the Tagus and the Zezere, the Sobreira Formosa would be nearly impassable, a greater number of the allied troops could be collected about Guarda, and a more stubborn resistance made on the northern line.

Every probable movement being thus previously well considered, Lord Wellington trusted that his own military quickness, and the valor of the British soldiers, could baffle any unforeseen strokes during the retreat, and once within the lines, (the Portuguese people and the government doing their part,) he looked confidently to the final result. He judged that in a wasted country, and with thirty regiments of militia in the mountains on the flank and rear of the enemy, the latter could not long remain before the lines, and his retreat would be equivalent to a victory for the allies. There were, however, many hazards. The English commander, sanguine and confident as he was, knew well how many counter-combinations were to be expected; in fine, how much fortune was to be dreaded in a contest with eighty thousand French veterans having a competent general at their head. Hence, to secure embarkation in the event of disaster, a third line of intrenchments was prepared, and twenty-four thousand tons of shipping were constantly kept in the river to receive the British forces; measures were also taken to procure a like quantity for the reception of the Portuguese troops, and such of the citizens as might wish to emigrate. It only remained to feed the army.*

In the Peninsula generally, the supplies were at all times a source of infinite trouble on both sides, and this, not as some have supposed, because Spain is incapable of supplying large armies; there was throughout the war an abundance of food in that country,

* Lord Wellington's Correspondence, MS.

but it was unevenly distributed, difficult to get at, and the people are of a nature to render it impossible to depend upon contracts even where they are friendly; some places were exhausted, others overflowing; the difficulty was to transport provisions, and in this the allies enjoyed a great advantage; their convoys could pass unmolested, whereas the French always required strong guards, first to collect food and then to bring it up to their armies. In Portugal there was however a real deficiency, even for the consumption of the people; after a time scarcely any food for man or beast (some cattle and straw from the northern provinces excepted) was to be obtained in that country: nay, the whole nation was at last in a manner fed by England. Every part of the world accessible to ships and money was rendered subservient to the cravings of this insatiable war, and yet it was often a doubtful and a painful struggle against famine, even near the sea; but at a distance from that nurse of British armies, the means of transport necessarily regulated the extent of the supply. Now wheel-carriage was scarce and bad in Portugal, and for the most part the roads forbade its use; hence the only resource for the conveyance of stores was water-carriage, to a certain distance, and afterwards beasts of burthen.

Lisbon, Abrantes, and Belem Castle, on the Tagus; Figueras and Raiva de Pena Cova, on the Mondego, and, finally, Oporto and Lamego, on the Douro, were the principal dépôts formed by Lord Wellington, and his magazines of consumption were established at Viseu, Celerico, Condeixa, Leiria, Thomar, and Almeida. From those points four hundred miserable bullock cars and about twelve thousand hired mules, organized in brigades of sixty each, conveyed the necessary warlike stores and provisions to the armies; when additional succors could be obtained, it was eagerly seized, but this was the ordinary amount of transport, and all his magazines in advance of Lisbon were so limited and arranged that he could easily carry them off or destroy them before the enemy.

With such means and with such preparations was the defence of Portugal undertaken, and it must be evident to the most superficial observer, that amidst so many difficulties, and with such a number of intricate combinations, Lord Wellington's situation was not one in which a General could sleep; and that, due allowance being made for fortune, it is puerile to attribute the success to aught but his talents and steel-hardened resolution.

In the foregoing exposition of the political and military force of the powers brought into hostile contact, I have only touched, and lightly, upon the points of most importance, designing no more than to indicate the sound and the diseased parts of each. The unfavorable circumstances for France would appear to be the absence

of the Emperor,—the erroneous views of the King,—the rivalry of the marshals,—the impediments to correspondence,—the necessity of frequently dispersing from the want of magazines,—the iniquity of the cause, and the disgust of the French officers, who for the most part, spoiled by a rapid course of victories on the continent, could not patiently endure a service replete with personal dangers over and above the ordinary mishaps of war, and promising little ultimate reward.

For the English, the quicksands were—the memory of former failures on the continent,—the financial drain,—a powerful and eloquent opposition, pressing a cabinet so timid and selfish that the General dared not risk a single brigade, lest an accident should lead to a panic amongst the ministers which all Lord Wellesley's vigor would be unable to stem,—the intrigues of the Souza party, and the necessity of persuading the Portuguese to devastate their country for the sake of defending a *European cause*,—finally, the babbling of the English newspapers, from whose columns the enemy constantly drew the most certain information of the strength and situation of the army. On the other side, France had possession of nearly all the fortified towns of the Peninsula, and, while her enormous army threatened to crush every opponent, she offered a constitution, and recalled to the recollection of the people that it was but a change of one French dynasty for another. The church started from her touch, but the educated classes did not shrink less from the British government's known hostility to all free institutions. What, then, remained for England to calculate upon? The extreme hatred of the people to the invaders, arising from the excesses and oppressions of the armies, the chances of another continental war,—the complete dominion of the ocean with all its attendant advantages,—the recruiting through the militia, which was, in fact, a conscription with two links in the chain instead of one; lastly, the ardor of the troops to measure themselves with the conquerors of Europe, and to raise a rival to the French Emperor. And here, as General Foy has been at some pains to misrepresent the character of the British soldiers, I will set down what many years' experience gives me the right to say is nearer the truth than his dreams.

That the British infantry soldier is more robust than the soldier of any other nation, can scarcely be doubted by those who, in 1815, observed his powerful frame, distinguished amidst the united armies of Europe; and notwithstanding his habitual excess in drinking, he sustains fatigue and wet, and the extremes of cold and heat, with incredible vigor. When completely disciplined,—and three years are required to accomplish this,—his port is lofty and his movements

free; the whole world cannot produce a nobler specimen of military bearing, nor is the mind unworthy of the outward man. He does not, indeed, possess that presumptuous vivacity which would lead him to dictate to his commanders, or even to censure real errors, although he may perceive them; but he is observant, and quick to comprehend his orders, full of resources under difficulties, calm and resolute in danger, and more than usually obedient and careful of his officers in moments of imminent peril.

It has been asserted that his undeniable firmness in battle is the result of a phlegmatic constitution uninspired by moral feeling. Never was a more stupid calumny uttered! Napoleon's troops fought in bright fields, where every helmet caught some beams of glory, but the British soldier conquered under the cold shade of aristocracy; no honors awaited his daring, no despatch gave his name to the applauses of his countrymen; his life of danger and hardship was uncheered by hope, his death unnoticed. Did his heart sink therefore? Did he not endure with surpassing fortitude the sorest of ills, sustain the most terrible assaults in battle unmoved, overthrow, with incredible energy, every opponent, and at all times prove that, while no physical military qualification was wanting, the fount of honor was also full and fresh within him?

The result of a hundred battles and the united testimony of impartial writers of different nations have given the first place amongst the European infantry to the British; but in a comparison between the troops of France and England, it would be unjust not to admit that the cavalry of the former stands higher in the estimation of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

Character of Miguel Alava—Portuguese government demand more English troops—Lord Wellington refuses, and reproaches the Regency—The factious conduct of the latter—Character of the light division—General Crawfurd passes the Coa—His activity and skilful arrangements—Is joined by Carrera—Skirmish at Barba del Puerco—Carrera invites Ney to desert—Romana arrives at head-quarters—Lord Wellington refuses to succor Ciudad Rodrigo—His decision vindicated—Crawfurd's ability and obstinacy—He maintains his position—Skirmish at Alameda—Captain Kraükenberg's gallantry—Skirmish at Villa de Puerco—Colonel Talbot killed—Gallantry of the French Captain Guache—Combat of the Coa—Comparison between General Picton and General Crawfurd.

In resuming the thread of military events, it is necessary to refer back to the commencement of the year, because the British operations on the frontier of Beira were connected, although not conducted in actual concert with those of the Spaniards; and here I deem it right to notice the conduct of Miguel Alava, that brave, generous and disinterested Spaniard, through whom this connection was kept up. Attached to the British head-quarters, as the military correspondent of the Junta, he was too sagacious not to perceive the necessity of zealously seconding the English General. But in the manner of doing it, he never forgot the dignity of his own country, and as he was too frank and honest for intrigues, his intercourse was always honorable to himself and advantageous to both nations.

It will be remembered that in February, Ney threatened Ciudad Rodrigo at the same time that Mortier menaced Badajos, and that Hill advanced from Abrantes to Portalegre. Lord Wellington immediately reinforced the line between Pinhel and Guarda, and sent the light division across the Coa, to observe the enemy's proceedings. The Portuguese Regency were alarmed, and demanded more British troops;* but Lord Wellington replied that the numbers already fixed would be as great as he could feed, and he took that occasion to point out, that the measures agreed upon with respect to the native forces were neither executed with vigor nor impartiality; and that the carriages and other assistance, required for the support of the British soldiers then in the country, were not supplied. These matters he urgently advised them to amend before they asked for more troops; and, at the same time, as the Regency, in the hope of rendering him unpopular with the natives, intimated a wish that he should take the punishment of the offenders into his own hands, he informed them that, although he advised the adoption of severe measures, he would not be made the despotic punisher

* Appendix 19, § 1.

of the people, while the actual laws were sufficient for the purpose.

When Ney first appeared before Ciudad Rodrigo, and the second corps under Mermet was at Placentia, Lord Wellington was considerably embarrassed; the French might have passed from Placentia across the Tagus and pushed between Hill and the army in Beira, or even between the latter and Lisbon, seeing that the Portuguese government had with their usual apathy neglected the works projected for opening the road from Thomar to Espinal; and thus, instead of being within three or four marches of the Tagus, Lord Wellington was nine marches distant. He was, therefore, forced to keep a keen watch upon the motions of the second corps, and to have his own troops in hand to withdraw from the frontier, lest the French should suddenly cross the Tagus; for the want of good information was now and for a long time after severely felt. This was in February; but when Del Parque's movement from Gata to Badajos occupied the attention of Mermet,* and that Junot commenced the siege of Astorga, the repairs of the road to Espinal being also in a forward state, his situation was different; the Portuguese army was brought up to Cea and Viseu, and the militia in the northern provinces were ordered to concentrate at Braga to guard the Tras os Montes.

Ciudad Rodrigo being soon after seriously menaced, Lord Wellington sent a brigade of heavy cavalry to Belmonte, and transferred his own quarters to Celerico; for he contemplated a sudden incursion into Castile with his whole army, intending to strike at the French magazines in Salamanca. But when he considered the force they had in his front, which could be also reinforced by Kellermann's and Junot's corps, and would therefore be strong enough to defend the Tormes, he relinquished this project, and confined his views to the succor of Ciudad Rodrigo, if occasion should offer without detriment to the general plan of defending Portugal in the lines. The conduct of both the British and the Portuguese governments cramped his exertions. The resources of the country were not brought forward, and the English General could scarcely maintain his actual position, much less advance; and yet the Regency treated his remonstrances lightly, exactly following the system of the Spanish Central Junta during the campaign of Talavera.

Indignant at their conduct, he told them that "their proceedings were evasive and frivolous; that the army could neither move forward nor remain without food; that the time was one which would not admit of idle or hollow proceedings, or partiality, or neglect of public or private interests; that the resources were in the country, could be drawn forth, and must be so if the assistance of England

* See page 317.

was desired; finally, that punishment should follow disobedience, and, to be effectual, must begin with the higher classes."* Then, issuing a proclamation, he pointed out the duties and the omissions of both magistrates and people, and by this vigorous interference procured some immediate relief for his troops.

Meanwhile, General Crawfurd had commenced a series of remarkable operations with the light division. His three regiments of infantry were singularly fitted for any difficult service; they had been for several years under Sir John Moore, and, being carefully disciplined in the peculiar school of that great man, came to the field with such a knowledge of arms, that, in six years of real warfare, no weakness could be detected in their system.

As the enemy's posts on the Agueda rendered it impossible for the light division to remain without cavalry beyond the Coa unless some support was at hand nearer than Guarda or Celerico, Crawfurd proposed that, while he advanced to the Agueda, Cole, with the fourth division, should take up the line of the Coa. But that General would not quit his own position at Guarda; and Lord Wellington approving, and yet desirous to secure the line of the Coa with a view to succor Ciudad Rodrigo, brought up the third division to Pinhel; and then reinforcing Crawfurd with the first German hussars, (four hundred excellent and experienced solders,) and with a superb troop of horse-artillery, commanded by Captain Ross, gave him the command of all the outposts, and ordered Pic ton and Cole to support him, if called upon.

In the middle of March Crawfurd lined the bank of the Agueda with his hussars, from Escalhon on the left to Navas Frias on the right, a distance of twenty-five miles, following the course of the river. The infantry were disposed in small parties in the villages between Almeida and the lower Agueda; the artillery was at Fort Conception, and two battalions of Portuguese caçadores which soon afterwards arrived, were placed in reserve, making a total of four thousand men and six guns.

The French at this period were extended in divisions from San Felices to Ledesma and Salamanca, but as they did not occupy the pass of Perales, Carrera's Spanish division being at Coria, was in communication with Crawfurd, whose line, although extended, was very advantageous. For from Navas Frias to the Douro, the Agueda was rendered unfordable by heavy rain, and only four bridges crossed it on that whole extent, namely, one at Navas Frias; one at Villar, about a league below the first; one at Ciudad Rodrigo; and one at San Felices, called the bridge of Barba del Puerco. While, therefore, the hussars kept a good watch at the two first bridges which were distant, the troops could always concentrate

* Appendix 19. § 1.


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face page 371.
Ciudad Rodrigo
S. da Francia
Ford of Carboneras
S. Felices
R. Agueda
Douro R.
Ford
Marialva
Carpio
Escalon
Gallegos
Ituero
Barquilla
Villa Puerco
Ford of Carros
Alameda
Espeja
Azava R.
Quinta
S. Pedro
Fort Concepcion
Villar
Nava d'aver
Duas Casas R.
Villa formosa
Almeida
Valda Mula
Turones R.
Naves Frias
Coa R.
Ford
Villar Mayor
Cº Bom
Seideiro
From Pinhel
Pinhel R.
Alfayates
Carvalhal
Sabugal
Alverca
Craufords
OPERATIONS
1810.
Montbruns Caval.y
Unfinish.d Tower
French Charge
Almeida
French Inf.y attacking 24th July
95 3 Cacadores 95
43
52
French
43 95 Checking Enemy
French
Coa R.
52 in March
Ford
Allies Defending the Bridge
Cavalry watching the ford
Cabeça
Negro

under Almeida before the enemy could reach them from that side; and on the side of Barba del Puerco, the ravine was so profound that a few companies of the ninety-fifth were considered capable of opposing any numbers. This arrangement sufficed while the Agueda was swollen; but that river was capricious, often falling many feet in a night without apparent reason. When it was fordable, Crawfurd always withdrew his outposts, and concentrated his division, and his situation demanded a quickness and intelligence in the troops, the like of which has seldom been known. Seven minutes sufficed for the division to get under arms in the middle of the night, and a quarter of an hour, night or day, to bring it in order of battle to the alarm-posts, with the baggage loaded and assembled at a convenient distance in the rear; and this not upon a concerted signal, or as a trial, but at all times and certain.

The 19th, General Ferey, a bold officer, desiring either to create a fear of French enterprise at the commencement of the campaign, or thinking to surprise the division, collected six hundred grenadiers close to the bridge of San Felices; and, just as the moon, rising behind him, cast long shadows from the rocks, and rendered the bottom of the chasm dark, he silently passed the bridge and, with incredible speed ascending the opposite side, bayoneted the sentries, and fell upon the piquet so fiercely, that friends and enemies went fighting into the village of Barba del Puerco while the first shout was still echoing in the gulf below. So sudden was the attack, and so great the confusion, that the British companies could not form, but each soldier encountering the nearest enemy, fought hand to hand, and their Colonel, Sydney Beckwith, conspicuous by his lofty stature and daring actions, a man capable of rallying a whole army in flight, urged the contest with such vigor that in a quarter of an hour the French column was borne back and pushed over the edge of the descent.

This skirmish proved that while the Agueda was swollen, the enemy could gain nothing by slight operations; but it was difficult to keep in advance of the Coa, because the want of money had reduced the whole army to straits, and Crawfurd, notwithstanding his prodigious activity, was unable to feed his division; wherefore, giving the reins to his fiery temper, he seized some church-plate, with a view to the purchasing of corn. For this rash act he was rebuked, and such redress granted that no mischief followed; and fortunately the proceeding itself had some effect in procuring supplies, as it convinced the priests that the distress was not feigned.

When the sixth corps again approached Ciudad Rodrigo in the latter end of April, Lord Wellington, as I have before said, moved his head-quarters to Celerico, and Carrera took post at St. Martin

Trebeja, occupying the pass of Perales; but being there menaced by Kellermann's troops, he came down in May from the hills to Ituero on the Azava river, and connected his left with the light division, which was then posted at Gallegos Espeja and Barba del Puerco. Crawfurd and he then agreed that, if attacked, the British should concentrate in the wood behind Espeja, and if unable to maintain themselves there, should unite with the Spaniards at Nava d'Aver, and finally retire to Villa Mayor, a village covering the passage of the Coa by the bridge of Seceira, from whence there was a sure retreat to Guarda.

It was at this period that Massena's arrival in Spain became known to the allies; the deserters, for the first time, ceased to speak of the Emperor's commanding in person, and all agreed that serious operations would soon commence. No good information could be obtained; but, as the river continued unfordable, Crawfurd maintained his position until the end of May, when certain advice of the march of the French battering-train was received through Andreas Herrasti; and the 1st of June, Ney, descending upon Ciudad Rodrigo, threw a bridge on trestles over the Agueda at the convent of Caridad, two miles above, and a few days afterwards, a second at Carboneras, four miles below the fortress. This concentration of the French troops relieved the northern provinces of Portugal from danger; sixteen regiments of militia were immediately brought down from Braganza to the lower Douro; provisions came by water to Lamego; the army was enabled to subsist, and the military horizon began to clear.

The 8th, four thousand French cavalry having crossed the Agueda, Crawfurd concentrated his forces at Gallegos and Espeja, and the Spaniards occupied the wood behind the last-named village; and it was at this moment, when Spain was overwhelmed, and when the eye could scarcely command the interminable lines of French in his immediate front, that Martin Carrera thought fit to invite Marshal Ney to desert!

Nothing could be more critical than Crawfurd's position. From the Agueda to the Coa the whole country, although studded with woods and scooped into hollows, was free for cavalry and artillery, and there were at least six thousand horsemen and fifty guns within an hour's march of his position. His right was at Espeja, where thick woods rendered it impossible to discover an enemy until close upon the village, while wide plains behind almost precluded hope in a retreat before the multitude of French cavalry and artillery. The confluence of the Azava with the Agueda offered indeed some security to his left, because the channel of the former river there became a chasm, and the ground rose high and rugged at each side

of the bridge of Marialva, two miles in front of Gallegos. Nevertheless, the bank on the enemy's side was highest, and to obtain a good prospect, it was necessary to keep posts beyond the Azava; moreover the bridge of Marialva could be turned by a ford below the confluence of the streams.

The 10th, the Agueda became fordable in all parts, but, as the enemy occupied himself with the raising of redoubts, to secure his bridge at Carboneras, and with other preparations for the siege of Rodrigo, Crawfurd, trusting to his own admirable arrangements, and to the surprising discipline of his troops, still maintained his dangerous position. He thus encouraged the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, and protected the villages in the plain between the Azava and the Coa from the enemy's foraging parties.

On the 18th, the eighth corps was seen to take post at San Felices and other points, and all the villages, from the Sierra de Francia to the Douro, were occupied by the French army. The 23d, Julian Sanchez, breaking out of Ciudad, came into Gallegos. The 25th, the French batteries opened against the fortress, their cavalry closed upon the Azava, and Crawfurd withdrew his outposts to the left bank. The 26th, it was known that Herrasti had lost one hundred and fifty killed, and five hundred wounded; and the 29th a Spaniard, passing the French posts, brought Carrera a note, containing these words: "*O venir luego! luego! luego! a secorror esta plaza.*" ("Oh! come, now! now! now! to the succor of this place.") On the 1st of July the gallant old man repeated his "*Luego, luego, luego, por ultimo vez.*"

Meanwhile, Lord Wellington, still hoping that the enemy, by detaching troops, would furnish an opportunity of relieving Ciudad Rodrigo, reinforced Crawfurd with the 14th and 16th light dragoons, and transferred his own quarters to Alverca, a village half-way between Almeida and Celerico. The Spaniards supposed he would attack, and Romana, quitting Badajos, came to propose a combined movement for carrying off the garrison. This was a trying moment! The English General had come from the Guadiana with the avowed purpose of securing Rodrigo; he had, in a manner, pledged himself to make it a point in his own operations; his army was close at hand, the garrison brave and distressed, the governor honorably fulfilling his part. To permit such a place to fall without a blow struck, would be a grievous disaster, and a more grievous dishonor to the British arms; the troops desired the enterprise; the Spaniards demanded it, as a proof of good faith; the Portuguese to keep the war away from their own country; finally, policy seemed to call for this effort, lest the world might deem the promised defence of Portugal a heartless and a hollow boast. Nevertheless, Romana

returned without his object. Lord Wellington absolutely refused to venture even a brigade, and thus proved himself a truly great commander, and of a steadfast mind.

It was not a single campaign but a terrible war that he had undertaken. If he lost but five thousand men, his own government would abandon the contest; if he lost fifteen, he must abandon it himself. His whole disposable force did not exceed fifty-six thousand men; of these, twelve thousand were with Hill, and one-half of the remainder were untried and raw. But this included all, even to the Portuguese cavalry and garrisons. All could not, however, be brought into line, because Reynier, acting in concert with Massena, had, at this period, collected boats, and made demonstrations to pass the Tagus and move upon Coria; French troops were also crossing the Morena, in march towards Estremadura, which obliged Lord Wellington to detach eight thousand Portuguese to Thomar, as a reserve; and these and Hill's corps being deducted, not quite twenty-five thousand men were available to carry off the garrison in the face of sixty thousand French veterans. This enterprise would also have taken the army two marches from Guarda, and Coria was scarcely more distant from that place: hence, a division must have been left at Guarda, lest Reynier, deceiving Hill, should reach it first.

Twenty thousand men of all arms remained, and there were two modes of using them: 1. In an open advance and battle; 2. In a secret movement and surprise. To effect the last, the army might have assembled in the night upon the Azava, and filed over the single bridge of Ciudad Rodrigo, with a view of capturing the battering train, by a sally, or of bringing off the garrison. But, without dwelling on the fact that Massena's information was so good that he knew, in two days after it occurred, the object of Romana's visit, such a movement could scarcely have been made unobserved, even in the early part of the siege, and certainly not towards the end, when the enemy were on the Azava.*

An open battle a madman only would have ventured. The army, passing over a plain, in the face of nearly three times its own numbers, must have exposed its flanks to the enemy's bridges on the Agueda, because the fortress was situated in the bottom of a deep bend of the river, and the French were on the convex side. What hope then for twenty thousand mixed soldiers cooped up between two rivers, when eight thousand cavalry and eighty guns should come pouring over the bridges on their flanks, and fifty thousand infantry would have followed to the attack? What would even a momentary success have availed? Five thousand undisciplined men brought off from Ciudad Rodrigo, would have ill supplied the

* Appendix 21.

ten or twelve thousand good troops lost in the battle, and the temporary relief of the fortress would have been a poor compensation for the loss of Portugal. For what was the actual state of affairs in that country? The militia deserting in crowds to the harvest, the Regency in full opposition to the General, the measures for laying waste the country not perfected, and the public mind despondingly! The enemy would soon have united his whole force and advanced to retrieve his honor, and who was to have withstood him?

Massena, sagacious and well understanding his business, only desired that the attempt should be made. He held back his troops, appeared careless, and in his proclamations taunted the English General, that he was afraid!—that the sails were flapping on the ships prepared to carry him away—that he was a man who, insensible to military honor, permitted his ally's towns to fall without risking a shot to save them, or to redeem his plighted word! But all this subtlety failed; Lord Wellington was unmoved, and abided his own time. "If thou art a great general, Marius, come down and fight! If thou art a great general, Silo, make me come down and fight!"

Ciudad Rodrigo, left to its fate, held out yet a little longer, and meanwhile the enemy pushed infantry on to the Azava; Carrera retired to the Dos Casas river; and Crawfurd, reinforced with the sixteenth and fourteenth light dragoons, placed his cavalry at Gallegos, and concentrated his infantry in the wood of Alameda, two miles in rear, from whence he could fall back, either to the bridge of Almeida by San Pedro, or to the bridge of Castello Bom by Villa Formosa. Obstinate however not to relinquish a foot of ground that he could keep either by art or force, he disposed his troops in single ranks on the rising grounds, in the evening of the 2d of July, and then sending some horsemen to the rear to raise the dust, marched the ranks of infantry in succession, and slowly, within sight of the enemy, hoping that the latter would imagine the whole army was come up to succor Ciudad Rodrigo. He thus gained two days, but on the 4th of July, a strong body of the enemy assembled at Marialva, and a squadron of horse, crossing the ford below the bridge, pushed at full speed towards Gallegos, driving back the piquets; the enemy then passed the river, and the British retired skirmishing upon Alameda, leaving two guns, a troop of the 16th and a troop of German hussars to cover the movement. This rear-guard was scarcely drawn up on a hill half-cannon shot from a streamlet with marshy banks, which crossed the road to Alameda, when a column of French horsemen was observed coming on at a charging pace, diminishing its front as it approached the bridge,

but resolute to pass, and preserving the most perfect order, notwithstanding some well-directed shots from the guns. Captain Krauchenberg, of the hussars, proposed to charge those who first came over, but the English officer did not conceive his orders warranted it, and the gallant German, riding full speed against the head of the advancing columns with his single troop, killed the leading officers, overthrew the front ranks, and drove the whole back. Meanwhile the enemy crossed the stream at other points, and a squadron coming close up to Alameda was driven off by a volley from the third caçadores.

This skirmish not being followed up by the enemy, Crawfurd took a fresh post with his infantry and guns in a wood near Fort Conception; his cavalry, reinforced by Julian Sanchez and Carrera's divisions, were disposed higher up on the Dos Casas, and the French withdrew behind the Azava, leaving only a piquet at Gallegos. Their marauding parties, however, entered the villages of Barquillo and Villa de Puerco for three nights successively, and Crawfurd, thinking to cut them off, formed two ambuscades, one near Villa de Puerco with six squadrons, another of three squadrons near Barquillo; he also placed his artillery, five companies of the ninety-fifth and the third caçadores in reserve, for the enemy were again in force at Gallegos, and even in advance of it.

A little after daybreak, on the 11th, two French parties were observed, the one of infantry near Villa de Puerco, the other of cavalry at Barquillo, and the open country on the right would have enabled the six squadrons to get between the infantry in Villa de Puerco and their point of retreat; but this was circuitous, and Crawfurd preferred pushing straight through a stone inclosure as the shortest road. The inclosure proved difficult, the squadrons were separated, and the French, two hundred strong, had time to draw up in square on a rather steep rise of land, yet so far from the edge as not to be seen until the ascent was gained. The two squadrons which first arrived galloped in upon them, and the charge was rough and pushed home, but failed; the troopers received the fire of the square in front and on both sides, and in passing saw and heard the French Captain, Guache, and his sergeant-major exhorting the men to shoot carefully. Scarcely was this charge over when the enemy's cavalry came out of Barquillo, and the two British squadrons having re-formed, rode against it, and made twenty-nine men and two officers prisoners, a few being also wounded. Meanwhile Colonel Talbot, mounting the hill with four squadrons of the fourteenth dragoons, bore gallantly in upon Captain Guache; but the latter again opened such a fire, that Talbot himself and fourteen men went down close to the bayonets, and the

stout Frenchman made good his retreat. Crawfurd then returned to the camp, having had thirty-two troopers, besides the Colonel, killed or wounded in this unfortunate affair.

That day Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered, and the Spanish troops, grieved and irritated, separated from the light division, and marching by the pass of Perales, rejoined Romana. Crawfurd then assumed a fresh position, a mile and a half from Almeida, and demanded a reinforcement of two battalions. Lord Wellington replied that he would give him two divisions if he could hold his ground, but that he could not do so, and knowing the temper of the man, he repeated his former orders *not to fight beyond the Coa.*

On the 21st, the enemy's cavalry again advanced, Fort Conception was blown up, and Crawfurd fell back to Almeida, apparently disposed to cross the Coa, but nothing was further from his thoughts. Braving the whole French army, he had kept with a weak division for three months, within two hours' march of sixty thousand men, appropriating the resources of the plains entirely to himself; and this exploit, only to be appreciated by military men, did not satisfy his feverish thirst of distinction. Hitherto he had safely affronted a superior power, and forgetting that his stay beyond the Coa was a matter of sufferance, not real strength, with headstrong ambition, he resolved, in defiance of reason and of the reiterated orders of his General, to fight on the right bank.

The British force under arms now consisted of four thousand infantry, eleven hundred cavalry, and six guns, and his position, one mile and a half in length, extended in an oblique line towards the Coa. The cavalry piquets were upon the plain in his front, his right was on some broken ground, and his left, resting on an unfinished tower eight hundred yards from Almeida, was defended by the guns of that fortress; but his back was on the edge of the ravine forming the channel of the Coa, and the bridge was more than a mile distant in the bottom of the chasm.

COMBAT OF THE COA.

A stormy night ushered in the 24th of July. The troops, drenched with rain, were under arms before daylight, expecting to retire, when a few pistol shots in front, followed by an order for the cavalry reserves and the guns to advance, gave notice of the enemy's approach; and as the morning cleared, twenty-four thousand French infantry, five thousand cavalry, and thirty pieces of artillery were observed in march beyond the Turones. The British line was immediately contracted and brought under the edge of the ravine; but meanwhile Ney, who had observed Crawfurd's false disposition, came down with the swoop of an eagle. Four thousand

horsemen and a powerful artillery swept the plain, the allied cavalry gave back, and Loison's division, coming up at a charging pace, made towards the centre and left of the position.

While the French were thus pouring onward, several ill-judged changes were made on the English side; part of the troops were advanced, others drawn back, and the forty-third regiment most unaccountably placed within an inclosure of solid masonry, at least ten feet high, situated on the left of the road, about half-musket shot down the ravine, and having but one narrow outlet. While thus imprisoned, the firing in front redoubled, the cavalry, the artillery, and the caçadores successively passed by in retreat, and the sharp clang of the ninety-fifth rifle was heard along the edge of the plain above. A few moments later, and the forty-third would have been surrounded, if here, as in every other part of this field, the quickness and knowledge of the battalion officers had not remedied the faults of the General. One minute sufficed to loosen some large stones, a powerfnl effort burst the inclosure, and the regiment, re-formed in column of companies, was the next instant up with the riflemen. There was no room to array the line, no time for anything but battle; every captain carried off his company as an independent body, and joining as he could with the ninety-fifth or fifty-second, the whole presented a mass of skirmishers, acting in small parties and under no regular command, yet each confident in the courage and discipline of those on his right and left; and all regulating their movements by a common discretion, and keeping together with surprising vigor.

It is unnecessary to describe the first burst of French soldiers. It is well known with what gallantry the officers lead, with what vehemence the troops follow, and with what a storm of fire they waste a field of battle. At this moment, with the advantage of ground and numbers, they were breaking over the edge of the ravine, their guns, ranged along the summit, played hotly with grape, and their hussars, galloping over the glacis of Almeida, poured down the road sabring everything in their way. Ney, desirous that Montbrun should follow this movement with the whole of the French cavalry, and so cut off the troops from the bridge, sent five officers in succession to urge him on; and indeed, so mixed were friends and enemies at the moment, that only a few guns of the fortress durst open, and no courage could have availed against such overwhelming numbers. But Montbrun enjoyed an independent command, and as the attack was made without Massena's knowledge, he would not stir. Then the British regiments, with singular intelligence and discipline, extricated themselves from their perilous situation. Falling back slowly, and yet stop

ping and fighting whenever opportunity offered, they made their way through a rugged country tangled with vineyards, in despite of their enemies, who were so fierce and eager, that even the horsemen rode in amongst the inclosures, striking at the soldiers as they mounted the walls or scrambled over the rocks.

As the retreating troops approached the river, they came upon a more open space; but the left wing being harder pressed, and having the shortest distance, arrived while the bridge was still crowded and some of the right wing distant. Major M'Leod of the forty-third, seeing this, rallied four companies on a hill just in front of the passage, and was immediately joined by a party of the ninety-fifth; and at the same time, two other companies were posted by Brigade Major Rowan on another hill flanking the road. These posts were maintained until the enemy, gathering in great numbers, made a second burst, when the companies fell back; but at that moment the right wing of the fifty-second was seen marching towards the bridge, which was still crowded with the passing troops. M'Leod, a very young man, but with a natural genius for war, immediately turned his horse round, called to the troops to follow, and taking off his cap, rode with a shout towards the enemy. The suddenness of the thing, and the distinguished action of the man, produced the effect he designed; a mob of soldiers rushed after him, cheering and charging as if a whole army had been at their backs, and the enemy's skirmishers, astonished at this unexpected movement, stopped short. Before they could recover from their surprise, the fifty-second crossed the river, and M'Leod, following at full speed, also gained the other side without a disaster.

As the regiments passed the bridge, they planted themselves in loose order on the side of the mountain. The artillery drew up on the summit, and the cavalry were disposed in parties on the roads to the right, because two miles higher up the stream there were fords, and beyond them the bridge of Castello Bom; and it was to be apprehended that, while the sixth corps was in front, the reserves, and a division of the eighth corps, then on the Agueda, might pass at those places and get between the division and Celerico. The river was, however, rising fast from the rains, and it was impossible to retreat farther.

The French skirmishers, swarming on the right bank, opened a biting fire, which was returned as bitterly; the artillery on both sides played across the ravine, the sounds were repeated by numberless echoes, and the smoke, rising slowly, resolved itself into an immense arch, spanning the whole chasm, and sparkling with the whirling fuses of the flying shells. The enemy gathered fast and

thickly, his columns were discovered forming behind the high rocks, and a dragoon was seen to try the depth of the stream above; but two shots from the fifty-second killed horse and man, and the carcasses, floating between the hostile bands, showed that the river was impassable. The monotonous tones of a French drum were then heard. The next instant, the head of a noble column darkened the long narrow bridge, a drummer and an officer in a splendid uniform leaped forward together, and the whole rushed on with loud cries. The depth of the ravine at first deceived the English soldiers' aim, and two-thirds of the passage was won ere a shot had brought down an enemy; yet a few paces onwards the line of death was traced, and the whole of the leading French section fell as one man! Still the gallant column pressed forward, but no foot could pass that terrible line; the killed and wounded rolled together, until the heap rose nearly even with the parapet, and the living mass behind melted away rather than gave back.

The shouts of the British now rose loudly, but they were confidently answered, and, in half an hour, a second column, more numerous than the first, again crowded the bridge. This time, however, the range was better judged, and ere half the distance was won, the multitude was again torn, shattered, dispersed and slain; ten or twelve men only succeeded in crossing, and took shelter under the rocks at the brink of the river. The skirmishing was then renewed, and a French surgeon coming down to the very foot of the bridge, merely waved his handkerchief and commenced dressing the wounded under the hottest fire; nor was this touching appeal unheeded—every musket turned from him, although his still undaunted countrymen were preparing for a third attempt. The impossibility of forcing the passage was, however, become too apparent, and this last effort, made with feebler numbers and less energy, failed almost as soon as it commenced.

Nevertheless, the combat was unnecessarily continued. By the French as a point of honor, to cover the escape of those who had passed the bridge. By the English, from ignorance of their object. One of the enemy's guns was dismantled, a powder-magazine blew up, and many continued to fall on both sides until about four o'clock, when a heavy rain causing a momentary cessation of fire, the men amongst the rocks returned, unmolested, to their own party, the fight ceased, and Crawfurd retired behind the Pinhel river. Forty-four Portuguese, two hundred and seventy-two British, including twenty-eight officers, were killed, wounded, or taken, and it was at first supposed that Lieutenant Dawson and half a company of the fifty-second, which had been posted in the unfinished tower, were also captured; but that officer kept close until the evening, and

then, with great intelligence, passed all the enemy's posts, and crossing the Coa at a ford, rejoined his regiment.

In this action the French lost above a thousand men, the slaughter at the bridge was fearful to behold; but Massena claimed to have taken two pieces of artillery, and it was true, for the guns intended to arm the unfinished tower, near Almeida, were lying dismounted at the foot of the building. They, however, belonged to the garrison of Almeida, not to the light division. That they were not mounted and the tower garrisoned, was certainly a great negligence; the enemy's cavalry could not otherwise have fallen so dangerously on the left of the position, and the after-investment of Almeida would have been retarded. In other respects, the governor, severely censured by Crawfurd, at the time, for not opening his fire sooner and more vigorously, was unblamable; the whole affair had been so mismanaged by the General himself, that friends and enemies were mingled together from the first, and the shots from the fortress would have killed both.

During the fight, General Picton came up alone from Pinhel. Crawfurd desired the support of the third division; it was refused, and excited by some previous disputes, the Generals separated after a sharp altercation. Picton was decidedly wrong, because Crawfurd's situation was one of extreme danger; he could not retire, and Massena might undoubtedly have thrown his reserves, by the bridge of Castello Bom, upon the right flank of the division, and destroyed it between the Coa and the Pinhel rivers. Picton and Crawfurd were, however, not formed by nature to act cordially together. The stern countenance, robust frame, saturnine complexion, caustic speech, and austere demeanor of the first, promised little sympathy with the short thick figure, dark flashing eyes, quick movements, and fiery temper of the second; nor did they often meet without a quarrel. Nevertheless, they had many points of resemblance in their characters and fortunes. Both were inclined to harshness, and rigid in command; both prone to disobedience, yet exacting entire submission from inferiors; and they were alike ambitious and craving of glory. They both possessed decided military talents, were enterprising and intrepid, yet neither was remarkable for skill in handling troops under fire. This also they had in common, that both, after distinguished services, perished in arms, fighting gallantly, and being celebrated as generals of division while living, have, since their death, been injudiciously spoken of as rivalling their great leader in war.

That they were officers of mark and pretension is unquestionable, and Crawfurd more so than Picton, because the latter never had a separate command, and his opportunities were necessarily more cir-

cumscribed; but to compare either to the Duke of Wellington displays ignorance of the men and of the art they professed. If they had even comprehended the profound military and political combinations he was then conducting, the one would have carefully avoided fighting on the Coa, and the other, far from refusing, would have eagerly proffered his support.

CHAPTER V.

Slight operations in Gallicia, Castile, the Asturias, Estremadura, and Andalusia —Reynier passes the Tagus—Hill makes a parallel movement—Romana spreads his troops over Estremadura—Lord Wellington assembles a reserve at Thomar—Critical situation of Silveira—Captures a Swiss battalion at Puebla de Senabria—Romana's troops defeated at Benvenida—Lascy and Captain Cockburn land troops at Mogner, but are forced to re-embark—Lord Wellington's plan—How thwarted—Siege of Almeida—Allies advance to Frexadas—The magazine of Almeida explodes—Treachery of Bareiros—Town surrenders —The allies withdraw behind the Mondego—Fort of Albuquerque ruined by an explosion—Reynier marches on Sabugal, but returns to Zarza Mayor—Napoleon directs Massena to advance—Description of the country—Erroneous notions of Lord Wellington's views entertained by both armies.

During the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, an expedition sailing from Coruña, under Porlier, seized Santona, and dismantled that and other points on the coast. At the same time Mahi, coming down from the Gallician mountains, menaced Astorga, and a detachment of his army under Toboado Gil occupied Puebla de Senabria, acting in concert with Silveira. Mahi's movements could not be well opposed by either Kellermann or Serras, during the siege, because the former had a strong detachment in Baños, and the troops of the latter were spread over too great an extent of ground; but, when the place fell, the eighth corps, being detached beyond the Tormes, to gather provisions, enabled Serras to act against the Gallicians. The latter were then driven into the mountains, and Toboado Gil, removing his stores from Puebla Senabria, drew closer to Silveira, in expectation of an attack; but Serras, only placing a Swiss battalion and sixty dragoons at Puebla, fell back to Zamora, and the eighth corps re-occupied the country between the Tormes and the Agueda.

Meanwhile Bonnet defeated the Spaniards at Sales, and entered Castropol, on the frontier of Gallicia, but returned to Oviedo, on hearing of the expedition to Santona. The Spaniards then re-embarked for Coruña; the project of a larger armament, to be directed

against Santander itself, was adopted, and Mahi affirmed that, if more arms and ammunition were sent to him from England, he would clear the plains of Leon, as far as the Esla river. His demands were complied with; Sir Home Popham was appointed to superintend the naval expeditions against the coast of the Asturias and Biscay, and a serious interruption of the French communications was planned, but never realized.

General Reynier now passed the Tagus with the second corps, but it appears that this movement should have been executed in June, for boats were collected at Barca de Alconete, in the middle of that month; and the French only waited for a detachment from Andalusia, when Mendizabel, taking the road of Zafra, attacked that detachment, at Los Santos, on the 23d, and Reynier immediately moved to its succor, with one division of infantry and all his cavalry. At this period the insurrection caused by Lascy's expedition to the Ronda, had drawn all the troops of the fifth corps from Seville to that side, the Duke of Aremberg and General Remond had fallen back behind the river Tinto, and Copons had advanced to collect provisions on the Odiel. In this threatening state of affairs, instead of returning to Merida, Reynier endeavored to surprise Imas, at Xeres de los Cavalleros, and failing in that, pushed across the Morena against Ballesteros, and the latter being at Campo Frio, beyond Aracena, and ignorant that Imas had retreated, could only save himself by a hasty flight across the frontier of Portugal. Meanwhile, Lascy being beaten in the Ronda, the fifth corps retired to Seville, D'Aremberg and Remond re-occupied Huelva and Moguer, and Reynier, going back to Merida, resumed his design of passing the Tagus. His boats were still at Alconete, for the Spaniards had neglected this opportunity of destroying them; but, as it was necessary to cover the operations both from Hill's division which was concentrated at Campo Mayor, and from the Portuguese troops behind the Elga river, a strong rear-guard was placed on the Salor to watch the former, and the French division at Baños advanced to Coria to awe the latter.* Reynier then quitting Merida the 10th of July, marched, by Truxillo and Caceres, upon Alconete and Almaraz, and effected the passage, his rear-guard following on the 16th. This cautious operation saved him from an attack meditated by Hill, who had received orders to unite with Romana, and drive the second corps back, with a view to gather the harvest for the victualling of Badajos and the other frontier fortresses. The passage of the Tagus being thus effected by the French, General Hill made a parallel movement, which, on his part, only required thirty-six hours; and meanwhile, Lord Wellington assembled a reserve at Thomar, under the command of General

* Plan 11.

Leith, consisting of eight thousand Portuguese and two thousand British infantry, just arrived from England.

Reynier having reached Coria, detached a force, by Perales, upon Sabugal, but recalled it when he found that Hill, having crossed the Tagus by Villa Velha, was at Castello Branco on the 21st. The two Generals then faced each other. Hill, joined by a strong body of Portuguese cavalry, under General Fane, encamped, with sixteen thousand men and eighteen guns, at Sarzedas, just in front of the Sobreira Formosa; his advanced guard was in Castello Branco, his horsemen on the line of the Ponçul; and a brigade of Portuguese infantry was posted at Fundao, to keep up the communication with Guarda, and to cover the Estrada Nova. Behind Hill, Leith occupied the line of the Zezere, and thus twenty-six thousand men, besides the militia, were in observation between the Estrella and the Tagus.

Reynier first made demonstrations on the side of Salvatierra, but being repulsed by some Portuguese cavalry, divided his forces between Penamacor and Zarza Mayor; he also established a post of one hundred and fifty men on the left bank of the Tagus, near the mouth of the Rio del Monte; and, by continual movements, rendered it doubtful whether he meant to repass the Tagus, or to advance upon Sarzedas, or to join Massena. Meanwhile, Ballesteros returned to Aracena; Imas to Xeres de los Cavalleros; O'Donnell entered Truxillo, and Carlos de España cut off the French post on the Rio del Monte. Romana was, however, soon obliged to concentrate his troops again, for Mortier was on the Guadalquivir, with a view to re-enter Estremadura. Such was the situation of the armies in the beginning of August; but Massena, when assured that Reynier had crossed the Tagus, directed the sixth corps and the cavalry upon Almeida, which led, as we have seen, to the combat on the Coa, during which Loison, imagining the governor to be a native, pressed him to desert the cause of the English—"*that vile people, whose object was to enslave the Portuguese.*"

Lord Wellington's situation was now critical. Ciudad Rodrigo furnished the French with a place of arms: they might disregard Almeida, and their tardy investment of it, viewed in conjunction with the great magazines collecting at Ciudad Rodrigo, indicated an intention of so doing. Massena's dispositions were such as rendered his true designs difficult to be discovered. The sixth corps and the reserve cavalry were, indeed, around Almeida, but, by telegraphic intercourse with the garrison, it was known that the investment was not real, and the heads of the columns pointed towards Celerico. Loison's advanced guard was in Pinhel the day

after Crawfurd's action; the second corps, divided between Zarza Mayor and Penamacor, and with boats, near Alcantara, on the Tagus, menaced equally the line of that river and the line of the Zezere; and it was as likely that Massena would join Reynier as that Reynier would join Massena. It was known by an intercepted letter, that Napoleon had ordered Reynier to invade by the line of Abrantes while the fifth corps entered the Alemetejo, and Massena acted by the valley of the Mondego; but as Reynier was by the same letter placed under Massena's command, and the fifth corps was not then in a condition to move against the Alemtejo, no certain notion of the enemy's intention could be formed. The eighth corps and the division of Serras and Kellermann, being between the Tormes and the Esla, might break into the northern provinces of Portugal, while the sixth and second corps should hold the allies in check, and this was undoubtedly the surest course; because the taking of Oporto would have furnished many resources, stricken the natives with terror, dispersed the northern militia, opened the great coast-road to Lisbon, and enabled Massena to avoid all the difficult country about the Mondego. The English General must then have retired before the second and sixth corps, unless he attacked Ney; an unpromising measure, because of the enemy's strength in horse: in fine, although Massena was dilatory, he had one hundred and sixteen thousand men and the initial operations in his power, and Lord Wellington was obliged to wait upon his movements.

The actual position of the allies was too extended and too forward, yet to retire at once would have seemed timid; hence Lord Wellington remained quiet during the 25th, 26th, and 27th of July, although the enemy's posts were thickening on the Pinhel river. The 28th, the British cavalry advanced to Frexadas, and the infantry withdrew behind the Mondego, except the fourth division, which remained at Guarda. The light division occupied Celerico; the other divisions were posted at Penhancos, Carapichina, and Fornos; the Portuguese troops were a day's march behind. The sick and wounded men were transferred daily to the rear, and the line of retreat kept free from encumbrance. The enemy then made a demonstration towards St. Joa de Pesquera, and defeated some militia at Fosboa, on the Douro, but finally retired across the Coa, and, after a few skirmishes with the garrison on the 3d of August, left the communication with Almeida again free. At the same time, a detachment of Reynier's horse was encountered at Atalaya, near Fundao, and beaten by the Portuguese cavalry and ordenanza with a loss of fifty killed or taken, after which the French withdrew from Penamacor.

On the side of Gallicia, Kellermann advanced from Benevente to Castro Contrijo, and detachments from Serras's division penetrated towards Monterey, ordering provisions for ten thousand men on the road to Braganza. Silveira then marched on Senabria, defeated a few of the enemy's cavalry there on the sixth; invested the Swiss on the 7th; and, on the 10th, obliged them to capitulate at the moment when Serras, who had foolishly left them there and neglected to succor them in time, was tardily coming to their relief. Five hundred men and an eagle were taken, and Silveira, who did not lose a man, thought of giving battle to Serras, but Beresford alarmed at such rashness sent him imperative orders to retreat; an operation he performed by abandoning his rear-guard, which was under the command of Colonel J. Wilson, and which, being closely pressed, was saved by that officer under circumstances of such difficulty that he received the public thanks of the Marshal.

This advantage in the north was balanced by a disaster in Estremadura. The Spanish generals, never much disposed to respect Lord Wellington's counsels, were now less so than before, from the discontent engendered by the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo. He had pressed upon Romana the policy of avoiding battles; had procured permission that Campo Mayor should be given to him as a place of arms, with leave to retire into Portugal when overmatched by the enemy; and he had shown him that Hill's departure greatly augmented the necessity of caution. Nevertheless, Romana joined Ballesteros, and, as their united force amounted to eighteen thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry besides partidas, the English General immediately foresaw that they would offer battle, be defeated, and lay open the whole frontier of the Alemtejo; he, therefore, directed Hill to send Madden's brigade of Portuguese cavalry to their assistance.

Madden reached Campo Mayor the 14th, but Romana's advanced guard under Mendizabel had been defeated on the 11th at Benvenida, and having lost six hundred men, was going to lay down its arms, when fortunately Carrera arrived with the Spanish cavalry and disengaged it; the whole then retreated across the Morena, the Monte Molin and Fregenal, but the French pursued and slew or took four hundred more.* The following day Mortier entered Zafra, and Romana retired to Almendralejos. The enemy did not, however, press this advantage, because Lascy with three thousand men from Cadiz, convoyed by Captain Cockburn of the British navy, had landed near Moguer and driven the Duke of Aremberg towards Seville, while Copons drove Remond upon Za-

* Captain Carrol's Despatches.

lamea; and although the French soon rallied and obliged Lascy to re-embark, Mortier was withdrawn towards the Morena, and Romana again advanced to Zafra. This affair at Moguer was very contemptible, but the tumid nature of Cockburn's despatches on the occasion obtained for it a momentary celebrity.

It would appear that Massena had been waiting for Mortier's movements to develop his own plans, for on the day that the latter entered Zafra, the sixth corps formally invested Almeida, and Lord Wellington immediately bringing up the Portuguese, recrossed the Mondego; the British being at Pinhel, Frexadas, and Guarda, and the Portuguese at Celerico, Govea, Melho, and Trancoso. In this situation, expecting a vigorous defence from Almeida, he had good hopes to delay the enemy for six weeks or two months, when the rains setting in would give him additional advantages in the defence of the country. He had intended to keep the light division on the Cabeça Negro overhanging the bridge of the Coa, and thus secure a communication with the garrison, or force the French to invest the place with their whole army. Crawfurd's rashness marred this plan, and he himself was so dispirited by the action on the 24th, that the commander-in-chief did not think it prudent to renew the project. Yet Massena's tardiness, and the small force with which he finally invested the place, led Lord Wellington to think of assembling secretly a large and chosen body of men behind the Cabeça Negro, with the view of suddenly forcing the bridge and the fords, and taking the French battering train, or at least bringing off the garrison; but while revolving this great stroke in his mind, an unexpected and terrible disaster broke his measures.

SIEGE OF ALMEIDA.

This fortress, although regularly constructed with six bastions, ravelins, an excellent ditch, and covered way, was extremely defective. The ramparts were too high for the glacis, and from some near ground, on the side of the attack, the bottom of the ditch might be seen. An old square castle, built on a mound in the centre of the town, contained three bomb-proofs, the doors of which were not secure; and with the exception of some damp casemates in one bastion, there was no other magazine for the powder. Colonel Cox was governor, and his garrison, composed of one regular and two militia regiments, a body of artillery and a squadron of cavalry, amounted to about four thousand men.*

On the 18th, the trenches were begun under cover of a false attack, and in the morning of the 26th (the second parallel being commenced) sixty-five pieces of artillery mounted in ten batteries

* Colonel Cox's Narrative.

opened at once. Many houses were soon in flames, and the garrison was unable to extinguish them; the counter fire was, however, briskly maintained, and little military damage was sustained. Towards evening the cannonade slackened on both sides; but just after dark the ground suddenly trembled, the castle, bursting into a thousand pieces, gave vent to a column of smoke and fire, and with a prodigious noise the whole town sunk into a shapeless ruin! Treason or accident had caused the magazines to explode, and the devastation was incredible. The ramparts were breached, the greatest part of the guns thrown into the ditch, five hundred people were struck dead on the instant, and only six houses left standing; the stones thrown out hurt forty of the besiegers in the trenches, and the surviving garrison, aghast at the horrid commotion, disregarded all exhortations to rally. Fearing that the enemy would take the opportunity to storm the ramparts, the governor beat to arms, and, running to the walls, with the help of an artillery officer, fired off the few guns that remained; but the French shells fell thickly all the night, and in the morning of the 27th, two officers appeared at the gates of the town, with a letter from Massena, offering terms.

Cox, sensible that further resistance was impossible, still hoped that the army would make a movement to relieve him, if he could impose upon the enemy for two or three days; and he was in act of refusing the Prince of Esling's offer, when a mutiny, headed openly by the lieutenant-governor, one Bernardo Costa, and secretly by José Bareiros, the chief of artillery, who had been for some time in secret correspondence with the French, obliged him to yield. The remainder of the native officers, disturbed by fear, or swayed by the influence of those two, were more willing to follow than to oppose their dishonorable proceedings, and Costa expressed his resolution to hoist the white flag. The governor, seeing no remedy by force, endeavored to procrastinate, and, being ignorant of Bareiros' treason, sent him to the enemy with counter propositions. Bareiros immediately informed Massena of the true state of the garrison, and never returned; and the final result was a surrender upon agreement that the militia should retire to their homes, and the regulars remain prisoners of war.

While the treaty was pending, and even after the signature of the articles, in the night of the 27th, the French bombarded the place. This act, unjustifiable, and strange because Massena's aide-de-camp, Colonel Pelet, was actually within the walls when the firing commenced, was excused, on the ground of an error in the transmission of orders; it, however, lasted during the whole night, and Cox also asserts that the terms of the capitulation with respect

to the militia were violated.* Pelet indignantly denies this, affirming that when the garrison, still amounting to three thousand men, perceived the Marquis d'Alorna amongst the French generals, the greatest part immediately demanded service, and formed a brigade under General Pamplona,† and the truth of this account is confirmed by two facts, namely, that the arganil militia were sent in by Massena the next day, and the 24th Portuguese regiment did certainly take service with the enemy in a body.‡ Yet, so easily are men's minds moved by present circumstances, that the greater number deserted again, when they afterwards saw the allied armies.

Bareiros, having joined the enemy, escaped punishment, but De Costa, being tried, was afterwards shot as a traitor, by the orders of Marshal Beresford. His cowardice and mutiny merited this chastisement, yet the evidence on which he was condemned was an explanatory letter, written to Lord Liverpool by Cox, while a prisoner at Verdun.

The explosion, the disappearance of the steeple, and cessation of fire, proclaimed the misfortune of Almeida in the allied camp, but the surrender was first ascertained by Lord Wellington on the 29th, when, with a telescope, he observed many French officers on the glacis of the place. The army then withdrew to its former position behind the Mondego; and while these things were passing on the Coa, the powder magazine in Albuquerque, being struck with lightning, also exploded and killed four hundred men. Reynier, after several demonstrations towards Castello Branco, in one of which he lost a squadron of horse, now suddenly reached Sabugal the 1st of September; and as the British piquets on the Pinhel were attacked the following day by the horsemen of the sixth corps, the enemy's plans seemed to be ripe for execution. Lord Wellington therefore transferred his quarters to Govea, withdrew his infantry behind Celerico, and fixed his cavalry at that place with posts of observation at Guarda and at Trancoso. Reynier, however, suddenly returned to Zarza Mayor, and, throwing a bridge over the Tagus at Alcantara, again involved the French projects in obscurity.

Massena experienced considerable difficulty in feeding his forces, and he seemed at first either disinclined to commence the invasion or undecided as to the mode. Two months had elapsed since the surrender of Ciudad Rodrigo, Almeida had only resisted for ten days, the French army was still behind the Coa, and it would seem

* Justification of Colonel W. Cox.
† Note by Gen. Pelet. Victoires et Conquêtes des Français.
‡ Mr. Stuart's Correspondence, MS.

by a second intercepted letter, dictated by Napoleon, in September, that he expected further inaction. "Lord Wellington," he observed to Massena, "has only eighteen thousand men, Hill has only six thousand; and it would be ridiculous to suppose that twenty-five thousand English can balance sixty thousand French, if the latter do not trifle, but fall boldly on after having *well observed where the blow may be given.* You have twelve thousand cavalry, and four times as much artillery as is necessary for Portugal. Leave six thousand cavalry and a proportion of guns between Ciudad Rorigo, Alcantara and Salamanca, and with the rest commence operations. The Emperor is too distant, and the positions of the enemy change too often, to direct how you should attack; but it is certain that the utmost force the English can muster, including the troops at Cadiz, will be twenty-eight thousand men." This letter was accurate as to the numbers of the English army, but Napoleon was ignorant how strongly Lord Wellington was thrusting Portugal forward in the press.

Massena had commenced the invasion before these instructions reached him; and to understand his operations it is essential to have a clear idea of the country in which they were conducted. The advanced positions of the allies extended from Almeida over the Sierra de Estrella, by Guarda to Fundao, Sarzedas and Castello Branco; no enemy could penetrate that line unless by force, and a serious attack on any one point was to be the signal for a gradual retreat of the whole, in concentric directions, towards the Lines. But, if Guarda were evacuated, the enemy while menacing Celerico, could move either by Belmonte or Covilhao and separate General Hill from Lord Wellington, the distance between those generals being twice as great as the enemy's perpendicular line of march would be. To balance this disadvantage, the road from Covilhao was broken up, a Portuguese brigade was placed in Fundao, and General Leith's corps were stationed at Thomar, between two intrenched positions, which formed the second temporary line of resistance. The first of those positions was behind the Zezere, extending from the Barca de Codies to the confluence of that river with the Tagus; the second behind the Alva, a strong and swift stream descending from the Estrella and falling into the Mondego some miles above Coimbra. Both were strong, the rivers deep and difficult of access, and the Sierra de Murcello closely hugs the left bank of the Alva.

During the spring and summer the Portuguese militia, now forming the second line of Zezere under Leith, had been kept in winter quarters, although with danger to the defence of the country; but the destitute state, with respect to money, in which the English

ministers kept Lord Wellington, prevented him from being able to bring these troops into the field until the last moment.

Hill's line of retreat from Sarzedas to the Zezere has already been noticed, and from that river to the Alva, there was a military road constructed through the mountains to Espinhal. But the country from Celerico to the Murcella, a distance of about sixty miles, is one long defile, lying between the Sierra Estrella and the Mondego; and the ridge upon which Celerico stands, being a shoot from the Estrella, and encircled by a sweep of the Mondego, closes this defile in front. In like manner the Sierra Murcella, covered by the Alva river, closes it in the rear, and the intermediate parts are but a succession of smaller streams and lower ridges. The principal road was repaired and joined to the road of Espinhal, and a branch was also carried across the Mondego to Coimbra. Thus an internal communication was established for the junction of all the corps. Nevertheless, between Celerico and the Alva, the country was not permanently tenable; because, from Guarda and Covilhao, there were roads over the Estrella to Gouvea, Cea, and Gallices, towns in rear of Celerico; and the enemy could also turn the whole tract by moving through Trancoso and Viseu, and so down the right bank of the Mondego to Coimbra.

Lord Wellington keeping the head of his army one march behind Celerico, in observation of the routes over the Estrella, and his rear close to the Alva, was master of this line of retreat; and as the Mondego was fordable in summer and bridged at several points, he could pass it by a flank movement in a few hours. Now the right bank was also one great defile, lying between the river and the Sierra de Alcoba or Caramula. This mountain, stretching with some breaks from the Douro to Coimbra, separates the valley of the Mondego from the coast line; and in approaching Coimbra it sends out a lofty transverse shoot, called the Sierra de Busaco, exactly in a line with the Sierra de Murcella, and barring the way on the right bank of the Mondego in the same manner that the latter Sierra bars it on the left bank. Moreover this route to Coimbra was the worst in Portugal, and crossed by several deep tributaries of the Mondego, the most considerable of which were the Criz and Dao. The Vouga, however, opened a passage through the Alcoba near Viseu, and that way the French could gain the great road from Oporto, and so continue their movement upon Coimbra.

Such being the ground on both sides of the Mondego, the weakest point was obviously towards the Estrella, and Lord Wellington kept the mass of his forces there. Massena was ill-acquainted with the military features, and absolutely ignorant of the lines of Torres Vedras; indeed, so secretly and circumspectly had those works

been carried on, that only vague rumors of their existence reached the bulk of the English army. Nay, the Portuguese government and British envoy, although aware defensive works were constructing, knew not their nature, and imagined, until the last moment, that the intrenchments immediately round Lisbon were the lines! Many British officers laughed at the notion of remaining in Portugal, and the major part supposed the campaign on the frontier to be only a decent cloak to cover the shame of an embarkation. In England the opposition asserted that Lord Wellington would embark; the Portuguese dreaded it; the French army universally believed it; and the British ministers seem to have entertained the same opinion, for at this time an officer of engineers arrived at Lisbon, whose instructions, received personally from Lord Liverpool, were unknown to Lord Wellington, and commenced thus:—"*As it is probable that the army will embark in September.*"

CHAPTER VI.

Third invasion of Portugal—Napoleon's prudence in military affairs vindicated—Massena concentrates his corps—Occupies Guarda—Passes the Mondego—Marches on Viseu—Lord Wellington falls back—Secures Coimbra, passes to the right bank of the Mondego, and is joined by the reserve from Thomar—General Hill anticipates his orders, and by a forced march reaches the Alva—The allied army is thus interposed between the French and Coimbra—Daring action of Colonel Trant—Contemporaneous events in Estremadura and the Condado de Niebla—Romana defeated—Gallantry of the Portuguese cavalry under General Madden—Dangerous crisis of affairs—Violence of the Souza faction—An indiscreet letter from an English officer creates great confusion at Oporto—Lord Wellington rebukes the Portuguese Regency—He is forced to alter his plans, and resolves to offer battle—Chooses the position of Busaco.

THIRD INVASION OF PORTUGAL.

Massena's command extended from the banks of the Tagus to the Bay of Biscay, from Almeida to Burgos; and the number of his troops present under arms exceeded one hundred and ten thousand men. From these, however, must be deducted thirteen thousand in the Asturias and province of Santander, four thousand in the government of Valladolid, eight thousand under Serras at Zamora and Benevente, and lastly, the reserve of Bayonne under General Drouet, nineteen thousand strong, which, organized as a ninth corps, entered Spain in August, and was replaced at Bayonne by a fresh reserve under General Caffarelli. Thus, the active army of invasion did not much exceed seventy thousand; and as every man.