

positions between them, without impeding the movements of the army. Those were attained, and it is certain that the loss of the *first line* would not have been injurious, save in reputation, because the retreat was secure upon the *second and stronger line*, and the guns of the first were all of inferior calibre, mounted on common truck carriages, and consequently immovable and useless to the enemy.

The movements of the allies were free and unfettered by the works. The movements of the French army were impeded and cramped by the great Monte Junta, which, rising opposite the centre of the first line, sent forth a spur called the Sierra de Baragueda in a slanting direction, so close up to the heights of Torres Vedras that the narrow pass of Ruña alone separated them. As this pass was commanded by heavy redoubts, Massena was of necessity obliged to dispose his forces on one or other side of the Baragueda, and he could not transfer his army to either without danger; because the sierra, although not impassable, was difficult, and the movement, which would require time and arrangement, could always be overlooked from the Monte Agraça, whence, in a few hours, the allied forces could pour down upon the head, flank, or rear of the French while in march. And this could be done with the utmost rapidity, because communications had been cut by the engineers to all important points of the lines, and a system of signals was established, by which orders were transmitted from the centre to the extremities in a few minutes.

Thus much I have thought fit to say respecting *the Lines*; too little for the professional reader, too much, perhaps, for a general history. But I was desirous to notice, somewhat in detail, works more in keeping with ancient than modern military labors; partly that a just idea might be formed of the talents of the British engineers who constructed them, and partly to show that Lord Wellington's measures of defence were not, as some French military writers have supposed, dependent upon the first line. Had that been stormed, the standard of Portuguese independence could still have been securely planted amidst the rocks of the second position.

To occupy fifty miles of fortification, to man one hundred and fifty forts, and to work six hundred pieces of artillery, required a number of men; but a great fleet in the Tagus, a superb body of marines sent out from England, the civic guards of Lisbon, the Portuguese heavy artillery corps, and the militia and ordenanza of Estremadura furnished, all together, a powerful reserve. The native artillery and the militia supplied all the garrisons of the forts on the second, and most of those on the first line. The British

marines occupied the third line; the navy manned the gun-boats on the river, and aided, in various ways, the operations in the field. The recruits from the dépôts, and all the men on furlough, being called in, rendered the Portuguese army stronger than it had yet been; and the British army, reinforced, as I have said, both from Cadiz and England, and remarkably healthy, presented such a front as a general would desire to see in a dangerous crisis.

It was, however, necessary not only to have strength, but the appearance of strength; and Lord Wellington had so dealt with Romana that, without much attention to the wishes of his own government, the latter joined the allies with two divisions. Yet the English General did not act thus, until he was assured that Massena's force was insufficient to drive the British from Lisbon. He felt that it would have been dishonest to draw Romana's troops into a corner, where they could not (from want of shipping) have escaped in the event of failure. The first division of Spaniards, led by Romana himself, crossed the Tagus at Aldea Gallega the 19th, and the 24th was posted at Enxara de los Cavalleros, just behind the Monte Agraça; the other followed in a few days; and thus before the end of October, not less than one hundred and thirty thousand fighting men received rations within the lines; more than seventy thousand being regular troops, completely disposable and unfettered by the works.

Meanwhile, Mendizabel, with the remainder of the Spanish army, reinforced by Madden's Portuguese dragoons, advanced towards Zafra. Ballesteros at the same time moved upon Aracena; and Mortier, ignorant of Romana's absence, retired across the Morena on the 8th, to be near Soult who was then seriously menacing Cadiz. Thus fortune combined with the dispositions of the English General, to widen the distance, and to diversify the objects of the French armies, at the moment when the allies were concentrating the greatest force on the most important point.

Massena, surprised at the extent and strength of works, the existence of which had only become known to him five days before he came upon them, employed several days to examine their nature. The heights of Alhandra he judged inattackable; but the valleys of Calandrix and Aruda attracted his attention. Through the former he could turn Hill's position, and come at once upon the weakest part of the second line; yet the abattis and redoubts erected and hourly strengthening, gave him little encouragement to attack there; the nature of the ground about Aruda also was such that he could not ascertain what number of troops guarded it, although he made several demonstrations, and frequently skirmished with the light division, to oblige Crawford to show his force.

That General, by making the town of Aruda an advanced post, had rendered it impossible to discover his true situation without a serious affair; and, in an incredibly short space of time, the division with prodigious labor had secured the position in a manner really worthy of admiration. For across the ravine on the left, a loose stone wall, sixteen feet thick and forty feet high, was raised; and across the great valley of Aruda, a double line of abattis was drawn; not composed, as is usual, of the limbs of trees, but of full-grown oaks and chestnuts, dug up with all their roots and branches, dragged, by main force, for several hundred yards, and then reset and crossed, so that no human strength could break through. Breast-works, at convenient distances, to defend this line of trees, were then cast up; and along the summits of the mountain, for a space of nearly three miles, including the salient points, other stone walls, six feet high and four in thickness, with banquettes, were built; so that a good defence could easily have been made against the attacks of twenty thousand men.

The next points that drew Massena's attention were the Monte Agraça and the vale of the upper Zizandre, where, from the recent period at which Lord Wellington had resolved to offer battle on the first line, no outworks had been constructed; neither the valley of Zibreira, nor the hills above Ruña, had been fortified. Here it was possible to join battle on more equal terms, but the position of the allies was still very formidable; the flanks and rear were protected by great forts, and not only was a powerful mass of troops permanently posted there, but six battalions, drawn from Hill's corps, and placed at Bucellas, could, in a very short time, have come into action.

Beyond Ruña, the Baragueda ridge and the forts of Torres Vedras forbade any flank movement by the French General; and it only remained for him to dispose his troops in such a manner between Villa Franca and Sobral that, while the heads of the columns menaced the weakest points of the lines, a few hours would suffice to concentrate the whole army at any part between the Tagus and the Baragueda ridge. The second corps, still holding the hills opposite Alhandra, extended its right along some open ground as far as Aruda; and being covered at that point by a force of cavalry, was connected with the eighth corps, the head of which was pushed forward on Sobral, occupying the lower ridges of the Baragueda, and lining the banks of the Zizandre as far as Duas Portas on the road to Ruña; the outposts of each army being there nearly in contact.

Massena did not bring the sixth corps beyond Otta, and his dispositions were not made without several skirmishes, especially near

Sobral, on the morning of the 14th, where, attempting to dislodge the seventy-first regiment from a field-work, his troops were repulsed, pursued, and driven from their own retrenchments, which were held until evening; and only evacuated because the whole of the eighth corps was advancing for the purpose of permanently establishing its position. The loss of the allies in these petty affairs amounted to one hundred and fifty, of which the greatest part fell at Sobral; that of the enemy was estimated higher. The English General Harvey was wounded, and at Villa Franca the fire of the gun-boats killed the French General St. Croix, a young man of signal ability and promise.

The war was now reduced to a species of blockade. Massena's object was to feed his army until reinforcements reached it; Lord Wellington's to starve the French before succor could arrive. The former spread his movable columns in the rear to seek for provisions, and commenced forming magazines at Santarem, where his principal dépôt was established; but the latter drew down all the militia and ordenanza of the north upon Massena's rear, putting them in communication with the garrison of Peniché on one side, and on the other with the militia of Lower Beira. Carlos d'España also crossing the Tagus, acted between Castello Branco and Abrantes. Thus the French were completely inclosed without any weakening of the regular army.

To aid the communication between Peniché and the militia of the north, Obidos, surrounded by old walls, had been put in a state of defence; but the Portuguese government having neglected to furnish it with provisions, it had been evacuated. Nevertheless, Major Fenwick again occupied it temporarily with three hundred militia, and being supported by a Spanish battalion and by a strong detachment of British cavalry posted at Ramalhal, hemmed in the French on that side; and a movable column under Colonel Waters, issuing from Torres Vedras, made incursions against the enemy's marauding detachments, capturing many prisoners, and part of a considerable convoy which was passing the Baragueda. The French were thus continually harassed, yet their detachments scoured the whole country, even beyond Leiria, and obtained provisions in considerable quantities.

Meanwhile, the main bodies of the hostile forces remained quiet, although Massena's right was greatly exposed. Lord Wellington had four British divisions and Romana's corps, forming a mass of twenty-five thousand men close round Sobral; and, by directing the greatest part of his cavalry and the six battalions at Bucellas upon Aruda, he could have assembled from eight to ten thousand men there also; these last, advancing a short distance into the plain,

could, in conjunction with Hill, have kept the second corps in check, while the twenty-five thousand, pouring down at daylight from the Monte Agraça, from the valley of Zibreira, and from the side of Ruña, could have enveloped and crushed the head of the eighth corps long before the sixth could have reached the scene of action. But war is a curious and complicated web! and while the purely military part was thus happily situated and strong, the political part was one of weakness and alarm. Scarcely could the English General maintain a defensive attitude, struggling as he was against the intrigues and follies of men who have, nevertheless, been praised for their "earnest and manly co-operation."\*

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## CHAPTER IX.

State of Lisbon—Embargo on the vessels in the river—Factionous conduct of the Patriarch—The desponding letters from the army—Base policy of ministers—Alarm of Lord Liverpool—Lord Wellington displays the greatest firmness, vigor, and dignity of mind—He rebukes the Portuguese Regency, and exposes the duplicity and presumption of the Patriarch's faction—Violence of this faction—Curious revelation made by Baron Eben and the editor of the *Braziliense*—Lord Wellesley awes the Court of Rio Janeiro—Strengthens the authority of Lord Wellington and Mr. Stuart—The French seize the islands in the river—Foolish conduct of the governor of Setuval—General Fane sent to the left bank of the Tagus—Lord Wellington's embarrassments become more serious—The heights of Almada fortified—Violent altercation of the Regency upon this subject—The Patriarch insults Mr. Stuart and nearly ruins the common cause.

THE presence of the enemy, in the heart of the country, embarrassed the finances, and the Regency applied to England for an additional subsidy. Mr. Stuart, seeing the extreme distress, took upon himself to direct the house of Sampayo to furnish provisions to the troops on the credit of the first subsidy; he also made the greatest exertions to feed the fugitive inhabitants, forty thousand of whom arrived before the 13th of October, and others were hourly coming in, destitute and starving.† Corn, to be purchased at any price, was sought for in all countries, from Ireland, America, and Egypt; and one thousand tons of government shipping were lent to merchants to fetch grain from Algiers. One commission of citizens was formed to facilitate the obtaining cattle and corn from the northern provinces; another to regulate the transport of provisions to the army, and to push a trade with Spain through the Alemtejo.

\* See *Annals of the Peninsular War*, Vol. II. p. 331.

† Mr. Stuart's Papers, MS.

Small craft were sent up the Tagus to carry off both the inhabitants and their stock, from the islands, and from the left bank; and post-vessels were established along the coast to Oporto. Bullion and jewels were put on board the men of war; a proclamation was issued, calling upon the people to be tranquil, and a strong police was established to enforce this object. Finally, to supply the deficiency of tonnage created by the sending off the transports in search of corn, an embargo was laid upon the port of Lisbon; it was strongly protested against by the Americans, but an imperious necessity ruled.

All these measures were vehemently opposed by the Patriarch and his faction; and that nothing might be wanting to show how entirely the fate of the Peninsula depended in that hour upon Lord Wellington's firmness, the fears of the British Cabinet, which had been increasing as the crisis approached, were now plainly disclosed. Their private letters contained hints at variance with their public despatches. They evidently wished their General to abandon the country, but threw the responsibility upon him; they were unable to comprehend his genius; they thought him rash, and were themselves unequal to the crisis. They had not the manliness either to resign the contest or to carry it on with vigor, and cast their base policy with a view only to their own escape in case of failure. During the retreat from the north, affairs seemed so gloomy to the eyes of some officers of rank, that their correspondence bore evidence of their feelings; the letters of General Spencer and General Charles Stewart appeared so desponding to Lord Liverpool, that he transmitted them to Lord Wellington, and by earnestly demanding an opinion upon their contents, showed how deeply they had disturbed his own mind.

Thus beset on every side, the English General rose like a giant. Without noticing either the arguments or the forebodings in these letters, he took a calm historical review of the circumstances which had induced him to defend Portugal, and which he had before explained to the very minister he was addressing; then showing that, up to that period, his opinions had been in every instance justified by the results, he assumed that it was reasonable to confide in his judgment for the future. Having thus vindicated his prudence and foresight, he traced out the probable course of coming events, discussing both his own and the enemy's designs, and that with such sagacity that the subsequent course of the war never belied his anticipations. This remarkable letter exists, and, were all other records of Lord Wellington's genius to be lost, it would alone suffice to vindicate his great reputation to posterity.

Having with conscious superiority replied to his own govern

ment, he, with a fierceness rendered necessary by the crisis, turned upon the Patriarch and his coadjutors. Reproaching them for their unpatriotic, foolish, and deceitful conduct, he told them plainly that they were unfaithful servants of their country and their Prince; and threatened to *withdraw the British army altogether*, if the practices of which he complained were not amended.\*

“The King of England and the Prince Regent of Portugal had, he said, “intrusted him with the conduct of the military operations, and he would not suffer any person to interfere. He knew what to do, and he would not alter his plans to meet the *senseless suggestions of the Regency*. Let the latter look to their own duties! Let them provide food for the army and the people, and keep the capital tranquil.” “With Principal Souza,” he said, “it was not possible to act, and if that person continued in power, the country would be lost. Either the Principal or himself must quit their employments; if himself, he would take care that the world should know the reasons; meanwhile he would address the Prince upon the conduct of the Regency.”

“He had hoped,” he resumed in another letter, “that the Portuguese government was satisfied with his acts, and that instead of endeavoring to render all defence useless by disturbing the minds of the populace at Lisbon, they would have adopted measures to secure the tranquillity of that capital. But, like other weak individuals, they added duplicity to weakness, and their past expressions of approbation and gratitude he supposed were intended to convey censure. All he asked from them was to preserve tranquillity, to provide food for their own troops while employed in the lines, and to be prepared, in case of disaster, to save those persons and their families who were obnoxious to the enemy.” “I have,” he said, “little doubt of final success, but *I have fought a sufficient number of battles to know, that the result of any is not certain, even with the best arrangements.*”

These reproaches were neither too severe nor ill-timed, for the war had been hanging in even balance, and the weight of interested folly thus thrown in by the Regency was beginning to sink the scale. Yet to show the justice of Lord Wellington's complaints, it is necessary to resume the thread of those intrigues which have been before touched upon. Instead of performing their own duties, the government assumed that the struggle could be maintained on the frontier, and when they should have been removing the people and the provisions from the line of retreat, they were discussing the expediency of military operations which were quite impracticable. When convinced of their error by facts, they threw the burthen of driving the country upon the General, although they knew that he

\* Appendix 19, § 4, 8.

was ignorant even of the names and places of abode of those officers and magistrates who were to execute it, and that there was but one Portuguese agent at head-quarters to give assistance in translating the necessary orders.

When this was remarked to them, they issued the orders themselves, but made the execution referable to the General, without his knowledge, and well knowing that he had no means of communicating with the country people, and this at the very moment of the enemy's advance. The battle of Busaco, by delaying the French army, had alone enabled the orders even to reach the persons to whom they were addressed. But it was the object of the Regency, by nourishing and soothing the national indolence, to throw the odium of harsh and rigorous measures upon the British authorities. Lord Wellington, however, while he reproached them for this conduct, never shrunk from the odium; he avowed in his proclamations, that he was the author of the plan for wasting the country, and he was willing the Regency should shelter themselves under his name, but he was not willing to lose the fruit of his responsibility, nor content that those whose courage did shrink from the trial, "should seek popularity with the populace at the expense of the best interests of the country."

After the disputes which followed the fall of Almeida, the English government, convinced that a more secure and powerful grasp must be taken of Portugal, permitted their envoy, Mr. Stuart, to have a seat in the Regency, and, influenced by Lord Wellington, insisted that the subsidy should be placed under the control of the British instead of the native authorities. Lord Wellesley also gave assurances that if the army was forced to quit Lisbon, the Portuguese troops should be carried to Oporto, and the war recommenced in that quarter; but Mr. Stuart very prudently reserved this information until the necessity should arrive, well knowing that the Patriarch and Souza, who had already proposed to go there themselves, would eagerly seize the occasion to urge the evacuation of Lisbon. The 2d of October, Mr. Stuart took his seat, and together with Doctor Noguera, the Conde de Redondo, and the Marquis Olhao (the former of whom was decidedly averse to the Souzas' faction, and the two latter moderate in their conduct) proceeded to control the intrigues and violence of the Patriarch and Principal Souza. It was full time, for both were formally protesting against the destruction of the mills in Beira, and vigorously opposing every measure proposed by Lord Wellington.

They were deeply offended by the suppression of the Lusitanian legion, which about this time was incorporated with the regular forces; they had openly declared that the Portuguese troops should



not retreat from the frontiers; and that if the enemy obliged the British army to embark, not a native, whether soldier or citizen, should go with it. When the allies, notwithstanding this, fell back to the lines, Souza proposed that the Regency should fly to the Algarves, which being indignantly protested against by Mr. Stuart, Souza threatened to quit the government. The dispute was then referred to Lord Wellington, and on the 6th of October, drew from him those severe expressions of which an abstract has been given above. When the army approached the lines, Souza proposed that the Portuguese troops should remain outside while the British took shelter within! a notion so preposterous as almost to justify Marshal Beresford's observation that he knew not whether the proposer were more fool, rogue, or madman.

The restless Principal however pursued his designs with activity, and in conjunction with his brothers and the Patriarch, established a regular and systematic opposition to Lord Wellington's plans of defence. Factionous in council, they were also clamorous out of doors, where many echoed their sentiments, from anger at some wanton ravages, that in despite of the General's utmost efforts, had marked the retreat. They courted the mob of Lisbon servilely and grossly; and Antonio Souza, getting the superintendence of the succors for the fugitive population, became the avowed patron of all persons preferring complaints. He took pains to stimulate and exasperate the public griefs, and to exaggerate the causes of them, frequently hinting that the Portuguese people and not the British army had formerly driven out the French. All these calumnies being echoed by the numerous friends and partisans of the caballers, and by the fidalgos, who endeavored to spread discontent as widely as possible, there wanted but slight encouragement from the Brazils, to form a national party, and openly attack the conduct of the war.

To obtain this encouragement, Raymundo, the old tool of the party in the Oporto violences, was sent to the court of Rio Janeiro, to excite the Prince Regent against Lord Wellington; and the Patriarch himself wrote to the Prince of Wales and to the Duke of Sussex, thinking to incense them also against the English General. But the extent and nature of the intrigues may be estimated from a revelation made at the time by Baron Eben, and by the editor of a Lisbon newspaper, called the *Braziliense*.

Those persons, abandoning the faction, asserted that the Patriarch the Souzas, and (while he remained in Portugal) the ex-plenipotentiary, Mr. Villiers, were personally opposed to Lord Wellington, Marshal Beresford, and Mr. de Forjas, and were then seeking to remove them from their situations, and to get the Duke of Brunswick appointed generalissimo in place of Beresford. This part of

the project was very naturally aided by the Princess of Wales; and the caballers in London had also sounded the Duke of Sussex, but he repulsed them at the outset. Part of their plan was to engage a newspaper to be their organ in London as the "*Braziliense*" was in Lisbon; and in their correspondence they designated Lord Wellington by the name of *Alberoni*; Lord Wellesley, *Lama*; Beresford, *Ferugem*; Mr. Stuart, *Labre*; the Patriarch, *Saxe*; Antonio Souza, *Lamberti*; Colonel Bunbury and Mr. Peel, the under-secretaries of state, *Thin* and *Bythin*; Sir Robert Wilson, *De' Camp*; Lord Liverpool, *Husband*; Mr. Villiers, *Fatut*; Mr. Casamajor, *Parvenue*; and so on of many others. After Mr. Villiers' departure, the intrigue was continued by the Patriarch and the Souzas, but upon a different plan; for, overborne by Mr. Stuart's vigor in the council, they agreed to refrain from openly opposing either him or Forjas, but resolved to write down what either might utter, and transmit that which suited their purpose to the Conde de Linhares and the Chevalier Souza, who undertook to represent the information so received, after their own fashion, to the cabinets of St. James and Rio Janeiro.

Mr. Stuart, having thus obtained their secret, was resolute to suppress their intrigues; but first endeavored to put them from their mischievous designs, by the very humorous expedient of writing a letter to Domingo Souza, in his own cipher, warning him and his coadjutors not to proceed, as their party was insecure, while Mr. Stuart, Lord Wellington, Beresford, and Forjas, being united and resolved to crush all opposition, might be made friends, but would prove dangerous enemies! This had apparently some effect at first, but Principal Souza would not take any hint, and the violent temper of the Patriarch soon broke forth again. He made open display of his hostility to the English General; and it is worthy of observation, that, while thus thwarting every measure necessary to resist the enemy, his faction did not hesitate to exercise the most odious injustice and cruelty against those whom they denominated well-wishers to the French, provided they were not of the Fidalgo faction. By a decree of the Prince Regent's, dated the 20th of March, 1809, private denunciations in cases of disaffection were permitted, the informer's name to be kept secret; and in September, 1810, this infamous system, although strenuously opposed by Mr. Stuart, was acted upon, and many persons suddenly sent to the islands, and others thrown into dungeons. Some might have been guilty; and the government pretended that a traitorous correspondence with the enemy was carried on through a London house, which they indicated; but it does not appear that a direct crime

was brought home to any, and it is certain that many innocent persons were oppressed.

All these things showing that vigorous measures were necessary to prevent the ruin of the general cause, Lord Wellesley dealt so with the Brazilian court, that every intrigue there was soon crushed, Lord Wellington's power in Portugal was confirmed, and his proceedings approved of. Authority was also given him to dismiss or to retain Antonio Souza, and even to remove Lord Strangford, the British envoy at Rio Janeiro, who had been the contriver of the obnoxious change in the members of the Regency, and whose proceedings generally were in unison with the malcontents, and mischievously opposed to Lord Wellington's and Mr. Stuart's policy in Portugal. The subsidies were placed under Lord Wellington's and Mr. Stuart's control, and Admiral Berkeley was appointed to a seat in the Regency; in fine, Portugal was reduced to the condition of a vassal state; a policy which could never have been attempted, however necessary, if the people at large had not been willing to acquiesce. But, firm in their attachment to independence and abhorring the invaders, they submitted cheerfully to this temporary assumption of command; and fully justified the sagacity of the man who thus dared to grasp at the whole power of Portugal with one hand, while he kept the power of France at bay with the other.

Although so strongly armed, Lord Wellington removed no person, but with equal prudence and moderation reserved the exercise of this great authority until further provocation should render it absolutely necessary. This remedy for the disorders above related was however not perfected for a long time, nor until after a most alarming crisis of affairs had been brought on by the conduct of the Lisbon cabal, of which notice shall be taken hereafter.

From the strength of the Lines, it was plain that offensive operations were more to be dreaded on the left, than on the right bank of the Tagus. In the Alemtejo, the enemy could more easily subsist, more effectually operate to the injury of Lisbon, and more securely retreat upon his own resources. Lord Wellington had therefore repeatedly urged the Regency to oblige the inhabitants to carry off their herds and grain from that side, and from the numerous islands in the river, and above all things to destroy or remove every boat. To effect this, a commission had been appointed; but so many delays and obstacles were interposed by the Patriarch and his coadjutors, that the commissioners did not leave Lisbon until the enemy was close upon the river, both banks being still stocked with cattle and corn, and what was worse, forty large boats being on the right side. This enabled the French to seize

the islands, especially Lizirias, where they obtained abundance of provisions; and while the Regency thus provided for the enemy, they left the fortresses of Palmella, St. Felipe de Setuval, and Abrantes with empty magazines.

Lord Wellington, thinking that the ordenanza on the left bank, of whom five hundred were, contrary to his wishes, armed with English muskets and furnished with two pieces of artillery, would be sufficient to repel any plundering parties attempting to cross the Tagus, was unwilling to spare men from the Lines: he wanted numbers there, and he also judged that the ordenanza would, if once assisted by a regular force, leave the war to their allies. Meanwhile Antonio Souza was continually urging the planting of ambuscades, and other like frivolities, upon the left bank of the Tagus, and as his opinions were spread abroad by his party, the governor of Setuval adopted the idea, and suddenly advanced with his garrison to Salvatierra on the river side.

This ridiculous movement attracted the enemy's attention, and Lord Wellington, fearing they would pass over a detachment, disperse the Portuguese troops, and seize Setuval before it could be succored, peremptorily ordered the governor to return to that fortress. This retrograde movement caused the dispersion of the ordenanza, and consternation reigned in the Alemtejo; the supply of grain coming from Spain was stopped, the chain of communications broken, and, the alarm spreading to Lisbon, there was no remedy but to send General Fane, with some guns and Portuguese cavalry, that could be ill spared from the Lines, to that side. Fane immediately destroyed all the boats he could find, hastened the removal of provisions, and patrolling the banks of the river as high as the mouth of the Zezere, kept a strict watch upon the enemy's movements.

Other embarrassments were however continually arising. The number of prisoners in Lisbon had accumulated so as to become a serious inconvenience; for the Admiralty, pretended to be alarmed at a fever generated by the infamous treatment the prisoners received at the hands of the Portuguese government, refused permission to have them transported to England in vessels of war, and other ships could not be had. Thus the rights of humanity, and the good of the service, were alike disregarded, for had there been real danger, Lord Wellington would not have continually urged the measure. About this time also, Admiral Berkeley, whose elaborate report the year before stated that, although the enemy should seize the heights of Almada, he could not injure the fleet in the river, admitted that he was in error; and the engineers were directed to construct secondary lines on that side.

Another formidable evil, arising from the conduct of the Regency, was the state of the Portuguese army. The troops were so ill supplied that more than once they would have disbanded, had they not been relieved from the British magazines.\* Ten thousand soldiers of the line deserted between April and December, and of the militia two thirds were absent from their colors; for, as no remonstrance could induce the Regency to put the laws in force against the delinquents, that which was at first the effect of want became a habit; so that even when regularly fed from the British stores within the Lines, the desertion was alarmingly great.

Notwithstanding the mischiefs thus daily growing up, neither the Patriarch nor the Principal ceased their opposition. The order to fortify the heights of Almada caused a violent altercation in the Regency. Lord Wellington, greatly incensed, denounced them to the Prince Regent, and his letter produced such a paroxysm of anger in the Patriarch, that he personally insulted Mr. Stuart, and vented his passion in the most indecent language against the General. Soon after this, the deplorable state of the finances obliged the government to resort to the dangerous expedient of requisitions in kind for the feeding of the troops; and in that critical moment the Patriarch, whose influence was, from various causes, very great, took occasion to declare that "he would not suffer burthens to be laid upon the people which were evidently for no other purpose than *to nourish the war in the heart of the kingdom.*"†

But it was his and his coadjutors' criminal conduct that really nourished the war, for there were ample means to have carried off in time ten-fold the quantity of provisions left for the enemy. Massena could not then have remained a week before the Lines, and his retreat would have been attended with famine and disaster, if the measures previously agreed to by the Regency had been duly executed. Whereas now, the country about Thomar, Torres Novas, Gollegao, and Santarem was absolutely untouched; the inhabitants remained, the mills, but little injured, were quickly repaired, and Lord Wellington had the deep mortification to find, that his well considered design was frustrated by the very persons from whom he had a right to expect the most zealous support. There was, indeed, every reason to believe that the Prince of Esling would be enabled to maintain his positions until an overwhelming force should arrive from Spain to aid him. "*It is heart-breaking,*" was the bitter reflection of the British General, "*to contemplate the chance of failure from such obstinacy and folly.*"

\* Appendix 19, § 7. † Appendix 19, § 10.

## CHAPTER X.

Massena's pertinacity—He collects boats on the Tagus, and establishes a *déjôt* at Santarem—Sends General Foy to Paris—Casts a bridge over the Zezere—Abandons his position in front of the lines—Is followed by Lord Wellington—Exploit of Sergeant Baxter—Massena assumes the position of Santarem—Lord Wellington sends General Hill across the Tagus—Prepares to attack the French—Abandons this design, and assumes a permanent position—Policy of the hostile Generals exposed—General Gardanne arrives at Cardigos with a convoy, but retreats again—The French marauders spread to the Mondego—Lord Wellington demands reinforcements—Beresford takes the command on the left of the Tagus—Operations of the militia in Beira—General Drouet enters Portugal with the ninth corps—Joins Massena at Espinhal—Occupies Leiria—Claparede defeats Silveira and takes Lamego—Returns to the Mondego—Seizes Guarda and Covilhao—Foy returns from France—The Duke of Abrantes wounded in a skirmish at Rio Mayor—General Pamplona organizes a secret communication with Lisbon—Observations.

THE increasing strength of the works, and the report of British deserters, (unhappily very numerous at this period,) soon convinced Massena that it was impracticable to force the Lines without great reinforcements. His army suffered from sickness, from the irregular forces in the rear, and from the vengeance of individuals, driven to despair by the excesses which many French soldiers, taking advantage of the times, committed in their foraging courses. Nevertheless, with an obstinate pertinacity, only to be appreciated by those who have long made war, the French General maintained his forward position, until the country for many leagues behind him was a desert; and then, reluctantly yielding to necessity, he sought for a fresh camp in which to make head against the allies, while his foragers searched more distant countries for food.

Early in October artillery officers had been directed to collect boats for crossing both the Tagus and the Zezere; Montbrun's cavalry, stretching along the right bank of the former, gathered provisions, and stored them at Santarem; and both there and at Barquina (a creek in the Tagus, below the mouth of the Zezere) rafts were formed and boats constructed with wheels, to move from one place to another, but, from the extreme paucity of materials and tools, the progress was necessarily slow. Meanwhile, Fane, reinforced by some infantry, watched them closely from the left bank; Carlos d'España came down from Castello Branco to Abrantes; Trant acted sharply on the side of Ourem, and Wilson's Portuguese militia so infested the country from Espinhal to the Zezere, that Loison's division was detached upon Thomar to hold him in check.

Towards the end of October, however, all the hospital stores and other incumbrances of the French army were removed to Santarem;

and, on the 31st, two thousand men forded the Zezere above Punhete to cover the construction of a bridge. From this body, four hundred infantry and two hundred dragoons, under General Foy, moved against Abrantes, and, after skirmishing with the garrison, made towards Sobreira Formosa, when the allies' bridge at Villa Velha was foolishly burnt; but Foy, with a smaller escort, immediately pushed for Peña Macor, and the 8th had gained Ciudad Rodrigo, on his way to France, having undertaken to carry information of the state of affairs to Napoleon; a task which he performed with singular rapidity, courage, and address. The remainder of his escort, retiring down the Zezere, were attacked by Wilson, and suffered some loss.

The bridge on the Zezere was destroyed by floods, the 6th of November, but the enemy having intrenched the height over Punhete, restored it, and cast a second at Martinchel, higher up the river. Massena then commenced his retrograde march, but with great caution, because his position was overlooked from the Monte Agraça, and the defile of Alemquer being in the rear of the eighth corps, it was an operation of some danger to withdraw from before the Lines. To cover the movement from the knowledge of the partisans in the rear, Montbrun's cavalry marched upon Leiria, and his detachments scoured the roads to Pombal, on the one side, and towards the Zezere, on the other. Meanwhile the sixth corps marched from Otta and Alemquer to Thomar, and Loison removed to Golegao with his division, reinforced by a brigade of dragoons.

These dispositions being made, General Clausel withdrew from Sobral during the night of the 14th, and the whole of the eighth corps passed the defile in the morning of the 15th, under the protection of some cavalry, left in front of Aruda, and of a strong rear-guard on the height covering Alemquer. The second corps then retreated from Alhandra by the royal causeway upon Santarem, while the eighth corps marched by Alcoentre upon Alcanhede and Torres Novas.

This movement was not interrupted by Lord Wellington. The morning of the 15th proved foggy, and it was some hours after daybreak ere he perceived the void space in his front which disclosed the ability of the French General's operations. Fane had reported on the 14th that boats were collecting at Santarem, and information arrived at the same time that reinforcements for Massena were on the march from Ciudad Rodrigo. The enemy's intention was not clearly developed. It might be a retreat to Spain; it might be to pass round the Monte Junta, and so push the head of his army on Torres Vedras, while the allies were following the rear. Lord Wellington, therefore, kept the principal part of the

army stationary, but directed the second and light divisions to follow the enemy, the former along the causeway to Villa Franca, the latter to Alemquer; at the same time he called up his cavalry, and requested Admiral Berkeley to send all the boats of the fleet up the Tagus, to enable the allies to pass rapidly to the other bank, if necessary.

Early on the 16th the enemy was tracked, marching in two columns, the one upon Rio Mayor, the other upon Santarem. Having passed Alcoentre, it was clear that he had no views on Torres Vedras; but whether he was in retreat to cross the Zezere by the bridges at Punhete and Martinchel, or making for the Mondego, was still uncertain. In either case, it was important to strike a blow at the rear, before the reinforcements and convoy, said to be on the road from Ciudad Rodrigo, could be met with. The first division was immediately brought up to Alemquer, the fifth entered Sobral, the light division and cavalry marched in pursuit, and four hundred prisoners were made, principally marauders. A remarkable exploit was performed by one Baxter, a sergeant of the sixteenth dragoons. This man, having only five troopers with him, came suddenly upon a piquet of fifty men, who were cooking, but instantly running to their arms, killed one of the dragoons; nevertheless Baxter broke in amongst them so strongly, that with the assistance of some cuntrymen, he made forty-two captives.\*

The 17th, the eighth corps marched upon Alcanhede and Pernes, and the head of the second corps reached Santarem, when Fane, deceived by some false movements, reported that they were in full retreat, and the troops at Santarem only a rear-guard. This information seeming to be confirmed by the state of the immense plains skirting the Tagus, which were left covered with straw-ricks, it was concluded that Massena intended to pass the Zezere, over which it was known that he had cast a second bridge. Hill was immediately ordered to cross the Tagus with the second division and thirteenth dragoons, and move upon Abrantes, either to succor that fortress or to head the march of the French. Meanwhile, the fourth, fifth, and sixth divisions were directed upon Alemquer, the first division and Pack's brigade upon Cartaxo, and the light division reached El Valle on the Rio Mayor. At this village there was a considerable rear-guard formed, and as General Crawford had not profited from the lesson on the Coa, an unequal engagement would have ensued, but for the opportune arrival of the Commander-in-Chief. In the evening the enemy joined their main body on the heights of Santarem.

Hitherto, Lord Wellington, regarding the security of the lines

\* Private Journal of the Hon. Captain Somers Cocks, 16th Dragoons.



with a jealous eye, had acted very cautiously. On the 15th and 16th, while the French were still hampered by the defiles, his pursuit was even slack, although it would in no degree have risked the safety of the lines, or of the pursuing troops, to have pushed the first, second, and light divisions and Pack's brigade vigorously against the enemy's rear. On the 18th, however, when Hill had passed the Tagus at Villada, and Fane was opposite to Abrantes, the English General, whether deceived by false reports, or elated at this retrograde movement, this proof of his own superior sagacity, prepared, with a small force, to assail what he then thought the rear-guard of an army in full retreat. But the French General had no intention of falling back any farther; his great qualities were roused by the difficulty of his situation, he had carried off his army with admirable arrangement, and his new position was chosen with equal sagacity and resolution.

Santarem is situated on a mountain, which, rising almost precipitously from the Tagus, extends about three miles inland. In front, a secondary range of hills formed an outwork, covered by the Rio Mayor, which is composed of two streams, running side by side to within a mile of the Tagus, where they unite and flow in a direction parallel with that river for many miles; the ground between being an immense flat, called the plain of Santarem. In advancing by the royal road from Lisbon, the allies ascended the Rio Mayor, until they reached the Ponte Seca, a raised causeway, eight hundred yards long, leading to the foot of the French position. On the right hand of this causeway as far as the Tagus, a flat sedgy marsh, not impassable, but difficult from deep water-cuts, covered the French left. On the left, the two streams of the Rio Mayor overflowing, presented a vast impassable sheet of water and marsh, covering the French right, and, in the centre, the causeway offered only a narrow line of approach, barred at the enemy's end by an abattis, and by a gentle eminence, with a battery looking down the whole length. To force this dangerous passage was only a preliminary step; the secondary range of hills was then to be carried before the great height of Santarem could be reached; finally, the town, with its old walls, offered a fourth point of resistance.

In this formidable position, the second corps covered the rich plain of Golegao, which was occupied by Loison's division of the sixth corps, placed there to watch the Tagus, and keep up the chain of communication with Punhete. On Reynier's right, in a rugged country, which separated Santarem from the Monte Junta and the Sierra de Alcoberte, the eighth corps was posted; not in a continuous line with the second, but having the right pushed for-

ward to Alcanhete, the centre at Pernes, and the left thrown back to Torres Novas, where Massena's head-quarters were fixed. On the right of Alcanhete, the cavalry were disposed as far as Leiria, and the sixth corps was at Thomar, in reserve, having previously obliged Wilson's militia to retire from the Zezere upon Espinhal.

Massena thus inclosed an immense tract of fertile country; the plain of Golegao supplied him with maize and vegetables, and the Sierra de Alcoberte with cattle. He presented a formidable head to the allies at Santarem; commanded the road, by Leiria, to Coimbra, with the eighth corps and the cavalry; that from Thomar, by Ourem, to Coimbra, with the sixth corps; and, by his bridges over the Zezere, opened a line of operations towards the Spanish frontier, either through Castello Branco, or by the Estrada Nova and Belmonte. He also preserved the power of offensive operations, by crossing the Tagus on his left, or of turning the Monte Junta by his right, and thus paralyzing a great part of the allied force, appeared, even in retreating, to take the offensive.

His first dispositions were, however, faulty in detail. Between Santarem and the nearest division of the eighth corps there was a distance of ten or twelve miles, where the British General might penetrate, turn the right of the second corps, and cut it off from the rest of the army. Reynier, fearing such an attempt, hurried off his baggage and hospitals to Golegao, despatched a regiment up the Rio Mayor to watch two bridges on his right, by which he expected the allies to penetrate between him and the eighth corps, and then calling upon Junot for succor, and upon Massena for orders, proceeded to strengthen his own position. It was this march of Reynier's baggage, that led Fane to think the enemy was retreating to the Zezere, which, corresponding with Lord Wellington's high-raised expectations, induced him to make dispositions, not for a general attack, by separating the second corps from the rest of the army, but, as I have before said, for assaulting Santarem in front with a small force, thinking he had only to deal with a rear-guard.

On the 19th, the light division, entering the plain between the Rio Mayor and the Tagus, advanced against the heights by the sedgy marsh. The first division, under Spencer, was destined to attack the causeway, and Pack's Portuguese brigade and the cavalry were ordered to cross the Rio Mayor at the bridges of Saliero and Subajeira, to turn the right of the French. The columns were formed for the attack, and the skirmishers of the light division were exchanging shots with the enemy in the sedgy marsh, when it was found that the guns belonging to Pack's brigade had not arrived; wherefore Lord Wellington, not quite satisfied with the appearance of his adversary's force, after three hours' demonstrations, ordered

the troops to retire to their former ground. It was, indeed, become evident, that the French were determined to maintain the position. Every advantageous spot of ground was fully occupied, the most advanced sentinels boldly returned the fire of the skirmishers, large bodies of reserve were descried, some in arms, others cooking; the strokes of the hatchet, and the fall of trees, resounded from the woods clothing the hills, and the commencement of a triple line of abattis and the fresh earth of intrenchments were discernible in many places.

On the 20th, the demonstrations were renewed; but, as the enemy's intention to fight was no longer doubtful, they soon ceased, and orders were sent to General Hill to halt at Chamusca, on the left bank of the Tagus. General Crawford, however, still thought it was but a rear-guard at Santarem, his eager spirit was chafed, he seized a musket, and, followed only by a sergeant, advanced in the night along the causeway; thus commencing a personal skirmish with the French piquets, from whose fire he escaped by miracle, convinced at last that the enemy were not yet in flight.

Meanwhile Clausel brought his division from Alcanhete close up to Santarem, and Massena, carefully examining the dispositions of the allies, satisfied himself that no great movement was in agitation; wherefore, recalling the baggage of the second corps, he directed Clausel to advance towards Rio Mayor; a feint which instantly obliged Lord Wellington to withdraw the first division and Pack's brigade to Cartaxo, the light division being also held in readiness to retreat. In truth, Massena was only to be assailed by holding the second corps in check at the Ponte Seca, while a powerful mass of troops penetrated in the direction of Tremes and Pernes; but heavy rains rendered all the roads impracticable, and as the position of Santarem was maintained for several months, and many writers have rashly censured the conduct of both Generals, it may be well to show here that they acted wisely and like great captains.

It has been already seen how, without any extreme dissemination of his force, the French General contrived to menace a variety of points, and thus to command two distinct lines of retreat; but there were other circumstances that equally weighed with him. He expected momentarily to be joined by the ninth corps, which had been added to his command, and by a variety of detachments; his position, touching upon Leiria and upon the Zezere, enabled him to give his hand to these reinforcements and convoys, either by the line of the Mondego or that of Belmonte and the Estrada Nova; at the same time he was ready to communicate with any troops coming from Andalusia to his assistance. He was undoubtedly open to a dangerous attack, between Santarem and Alcanhete; but

he judged that his adversary would not venture on such a decisive operation, requiring rapid well-timed movements, with an army composed of three different nations, and unpractised in great evolutions. In this, guided by his long experience of war, he calculated upon moral considerations with confidence, and he that does not understand this part of war is but half a general.

Like a great commander, he calculated likewise upon the military and political effect that his menacing attitude would have. While he maintained Santarem, he appeared, as it were, to besiege Lisbon; he prolonged the sufferings of that city; and it has been estimated that forty thousand persons died from privations within the lines during the winter of 1810: moreover he encouraged the disaffected, and shook the power which the English had assumed in Portugal, thus rendering their final success so doubtful in appearance, that few men had sagacity enough to judge rightly upon the subject. At this period also, as the illness of George the Third, by reviving the question of a Regency in England, had greatly strengthened the opposition in Parliament, it was most important that the arguments of the latter against the war should seem to be enforced by the position of the French army. It is plain therefore that, while any food was to be obtained, there were abundant reasons to justify Massena in holding his ground; and it must be admitted that, if he committed great errors in the early part of his campaign, in the latter part he proved himself a daring, able, and most pertinacious commander.

On the side of the British General, such were the political difficulties, that a battle was equally to be desired and dreaded. Desirable, because a victory would have silenced his opponents both in England and Portugal, and placed him in a situation to dictate the measures of war to the ministers instead of having to struggle incessantly against their fears. Desirable, to relieve the misery of the Portuguese people, who were in a state of horrible suffering; but, above all things desirable, lest a second and a third army, now gathering in Castile and in Andalusia, should reach Massena, and again shut up the allies in their works.

Dreaded, because a defeat or even a repulse would have been tantamount to the ruin of the cause; for it was at this period that the disputes in the Regency, relative to the lines at Almada, were most violent, and the slightest disaster would have placed the Patriarch at the head of a national party. Dreaded, because of the discussions relative to the appointment of a Regency in England, seeing that any serious military check would have caused the opposition to triumph, and the troops to be withdrawn from Portugal. So powerful, indeed, were the opposition, and so much did the minis-

ters dread their cry for economy, that forgetting the safety of the army in their keen love of place, they had actually ordered Lord Wellington to send home the transports to save expense! In fine, Mr. Percival, with that narrow cunning that distinguished his public career, was, to use an expression attributed to him, "*starving the war in Portugal*," in despite of Lord Wellesley's indignation and of Lord Wellington's remonstrances. In this balanced state it was essential that a battle, upon which so many great interests hung, should not be fought, except on terms of advantage. Now those terms were not to be had. Lord Wellington, who had received some reinforcements from Halifax and England, had indeed more than seventy thousand fighting men under arms, and the enemy at this time was not more than fifty thousand: nevertheless, if we analyze the composition and situation of both, it will be found that the latter, from the advantage of position, could actually bring more soldiers into the fight.

In the Portuguese army, since the month of April, the deaths had been four thousand, the disbanded four thousand, the deserters ten thousand, the recruits thirty thousand;\* the numbers were therefore increased, but the efficiency for grand evolutions rather decreased; and every department under Beresford was at its last gasp from the negligence of the government, which neither paid the troops nor provided them with food. The Spanish auxiliaries also, ill-governed and turbulent, were at open discord with the Portuguese; and their General was neither able in war himself nor amenable to those who were.

While the heights of Almada were naked, the left bank of the Tagus required twelve thousand men; and two British divisions were kept in the lines, because the French at Alcanhete were nearer to Torres Vedras than the allies were at Cartaxo. During an attack on Pernes, Reynier might break out from Santarem, and ten thousand men were therefore necessary to hold him in check; thus the disposable troops, comprehending soldiers of three nations, and many recruits, would have fallen short of forty-five thousand, while Massena could bring nearly all his force together on one point; because a few men would have sufficed to watch the British division on the left of the Tagus and at Santarem.

Lord Wellington's experience in the movement of great armies was not at this period equal to his adversary's, and the attack was to be made in a difficult country, with deep roads, where the Alvielly, the Almonda, and other rivers, greatly swelled by incessant rain, furnished a succession of defensive lines to the enemy, and in case of defeat the means of carrying off two-thirds of his army. Vic-

\* Mr. Stuart's Papers, MS.

tory might crown the attempt, but the stakes were unequal. If Massena lost even a third of his force, the ninth corps could have replaced it. If Lord Wellington failed, the Lines were gone, and with them the whole Peninsula. He judged it better to remain on the defensive, to strengthen the Lines, and to get the works at Almada sufficiently forward; meanwhile to perfect the discipline of the Portuguese troops, improve the organization of the militia in rear of the enemy, and above all to quiet the troubles and remedy the evils occasioned by the Patriarch's faction. Amongst these evils the destitute state of the fortresses, especially Abrantes, was prominent. Lord Wellington at one moment seriously thought of withdrawing the garrison from thence to prevent the men from starving.

In this view, the light division, supported by a brigade of cavalry, occupied Valle and the heights overlooking the marsh and inundation; the bridge at the English end of the causeway was mined, and a sugar-loaf hill, looking straight down the approach, was crowned with embrasures for artillery and laced in front with a zig-zag covered way, capable of containing five hundred infantry: the causeway being thus blocked, the French could not, while the inundation kept up, make any sudden irruption from Santarem.

On the left of the light division, posts were extended along the inundation to Malhorquija; thence by a range of heights to Rio Mayor; and behind the latter place, Anson's cavalry was stationed in observation of the roads leading from Pernes and Alcanhete. In rear of Anson, a position was intrenched at Alcoentre, and occupied by a division of infantry. Thus all the routes leading upon the Lines between the Tagus and the Monte Junta, were secured by what are technically called heads of cantonments, under cover of which, the other divisions were disposed in succession. The first and the head-quarters were at Cartaxo, a few miles in the rear of Valle, the remainder at Alemquer and Sobral. Torres Vedras was, however, always occupied in force, lest the enemy should make a sudden march round the Monte Junta.

Massena, satisfied that his front was safe, continued to build boats, fortified a post at Tancos, on the Tagus, and expected, with impatience, the arrival of a convoy escorted by five thousand men, with which General Gardanne was coming from Ciudad Rodrigo. This reinforcement, consisting of detachments and convalescents left in Castile when the army entered Portugal, had marched by Belmonte and the Estrada Nova, and the 27th was at Cardijos, within a few leagues of the French bridges on the Zezere. The advance of a cavalry patrol on either side would have opened the communications, and secured the junction; but, at that moment, Gardanne,

harassed by the ordenanza, and deceived by a false rumor that General Hill was in Abrantes, ready to move against him, suddenly retreated upon Sabugal, with such haste and blindness, that he sacrificed a part of his convoy, and lost many men.

Notwithstanding this event, Massena, expecting to be joined by the ninth corps, greatly strengthened his position at Santarem, which enabled him to draw the bulk of his forces to his right, and to continue his marauding excursions in the most daring manner. General Ferey, with a strong detachment of the sixth corps, crossing the Zezere, foraged the country as far as Castello Branco without difficulty, and returned without loss; Junot occupied Leiria and Ourem with detachments of the eighth corps; and on the 9th of December a battalion endeavored to surprise Coimbra; Trant, however, baffled that project. Meanwhile, Drouet avowed a design to invade the *Tras os Montes*, but the 22d of December occupied the line of the Coa with the ninth corps, while Massena's patrols appeared again on the Mondego above Coimbra, making inquiries about the fords: all the spies likewise reported that a great reunion of forces from the south was to take place near Madrid.

These things gave reason to fear, either that Massena intended to file behind the Mondego and seize Oporto; or that the reinforcements coming to him were so large that he meant to establish bridges over the Mondego, and occupy the northern country without quitting his present position. It was known that a tenth corps was forming at Burgos, and the head of the fifth corps was again in Estremadura; the French boats at Punhete and Barquina were numerous and large; and in all parts there was evidence of great forces assembling for a mighty effort on both sides of the Tagus.

It was calculated that, before the end of January, more than forty thousand fresh troops would co-operate with Massena, and preparations were made accordingly. An outward line of defence, from Aldea Gallega to Setuval, was already in a forward state; Abrantes, Palmella, and St. Felipe de Setuval had been at last provisioned; and a chain of forts parallel to the Tagus were constructing on the hills lining the left bank from Almada to Traffaria. Laborers had also been continually employed in strengthening the works of Alhandra, Aruda, and Monte Agraça, which were now nearly impregnable, soldiers only being wanting to defy the utmost force that could be brought against them. To procure these, Lord Wellington wrote earnestly to Lord Liverpool on the 29th of December, demonstrating the absolute necessity of reinforcing the army, wherefore five thousand British troops were ordered to embark for Lisbon, and three regiments were drafted from Sicily.

Sickness had obliged General Hill to go home in December,

but, it being known that Soult was collecting a disposable force behind the Morena, the troops on the left bank of the Tagus were augmented, and Marshal Beresford assumed the command, for the Portuguese army was now generally incorporated with the British divisions. His force, composed of eighteen guns, two divisions of infantry, and five regiments of cavalry, Portuguese and British, was about fourteen thousand men, exclusive of Carlos d'España's brigade, which, being at Abrantes, was also under his orders.

To prevent the passage of the Tagus; to intercept all communication between Massena and Soult; to join the main body of the army, by Vellada if in retreat, and by Abrantes if in advance; were the instructions given to Beresford. He fixed his quarters at Chamusca, disposed his troops along the Tagus, from Almeirim by Chamusca, as high as the mouth of the Zezere, established signals between his different quarters, and scouring the roads leading towards Spanish Estremadura, established a sure and rapid intercourse with Elvas and the other frontier fortresses. He also organized good sources of intelligence at Golegao, at Santarem, and at Thomar, and, in addition to these general precautions, erected batteries opposite the mouth of the Zezere; but against the advice of the engineers, he placed them at too great distance from the river, and in other respects unsuitably, and offering nothing threatening to the enemy; the French craft dropped down frequently towards Santarem, without hindrance, until Colonel Colborne, of the sixty-sixth regiment, moored a guard-boat close to the mouth of the Zezere, and disposed fires in such a manner on the banks of the Tagus that nothing could pass without being observed.\*

Meanwhile on the side of Santarem, as all the country between Alcanhete and the Ponte Seca continued impracticable from the rain, the main bodies of both armies were, of necessity, tranquil. Anson's cavalry, however, acting in concert with Major Fenwick, who came down from Obidos towards Rio Mayor, harassed the enemy's foraging parties; and in the Upper Beira several actions of importance had taken place with the militia, which it is time to notice as forming an essential part of Lord Wellington's combinations.

It will be remembered that the ninth corps, being ordered to scour Biscay and Upper Castile in its progress towards the frontier of Portugal, was so long delayed that, instead of keeping the communications of Massena free, and securing his base, Drouet lost all connection with the army of Portugal. Meanwhile the partidas of Leon and Salamanca gave such employment to Serras' division that the Tras os Montes were unmolested, and Silveira, falling down to the lower Douro, appeared, on the 29th of October, before

\* Appendix 24, § 1.



Almeida. Its former garrison had entered the French service, yet immediately deserted to their countrymen, and Silveira then blockaded the place closely, and made an attempt to surprise a French post at San Felices, but failed.

In November, however, the head of the ninth corps reached Ciudad Rodrigo, bringing a large convoy of provisions, collected in Castile, for Massena. Lord Wellington, anxious to prevent this from reaching its destination, directed Silveira to intercept it if possible, and ordered Miller on the 16th to Viseu, in support. On the 13th, General Gardanne, with four thousand infantry and three squadrons of cavalry, raised the blockade of Almeida, took possession of Pinhel, and, supported by the ninth corps, conducted the convoy towards Sabugal and Penamacor. The 16th, he was between Valverde and Pereiro Gavillos, but Silveira falling upon him killed some of his men, took many prisoners, and then retiring to Trancoso on the 17th, united with Miller, who took post at Guarda. Nevertheless, Gardanne pursued his march, but finally, as we have seen, retreated from Cardigos in a panic.

Drouet had not yet received the orders to put himself under Massena's command, but, at the representation of Foy, moved forward into Portugal, and to hide his object, spread the report, already noticed, of his intention to penetrate the *Tras os Montes*. The 17th December, he passed the Coa with fourteen thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry, and crossing the Mondego the 18th, encamped near Gouvea the 22d. Thence the cavalry and one division under General Claparede marched against Silveira, and after a skirmish occupied Trancoso; while Drouet with eleven battalions, and the troops under Gardanne, which he had rallied, made for the Alva and reached Ponte Murcella the 24th.

Hitherto Lord Wellington's communications with Baccellar had been carried on through Trant on the side of Coimbra, and through Wilson on that of Espinhal and Abrantes. But this sudden advance of the ninth corps obliged Wilson to cross the Mondego to avoid being inclosed; and Drouet, effecting his junction with Massena by Espinhal, established his division at Leiria, and spreading towards the sea cut off all communication between the allies and the northern provinces. On the 2d of January, however, Trant intercepted a letter from Drouet to Claparede, giving an account of his own arrival, and of the state of Massena's army; intimating, also, that a great operation was in contemplation, and that the fifth corps was daily expected in the *Alemtejo*; he directed Claparede to seize Guarda, to forage the neighboring villages, to watch the road of Belmonte, and if Silveira should be troublesome, to defeat him.

Silveira, an insufficient man, naturally vain, and inflated with his

former successes, had already attacked Claparede, and was defeated with the loss of two hundred men at Ponte Abad, on the side of Trancoso, and Baccellar, alarmed for the safety of Oporto, recalled Miller and Wilson. The first immediately moved upon Viseu, and the last, who had already repassed the Mondego and taken a hundred stragglers of Drouet's division, marched hastily towards the same point. Meanwhile, Silveira had again provoked Claparede, who pressed him so closely, from the 10th to the 13th of January, that he drove him with loss over the Douro at Pezo de Ragoa, seized Lamego, and menaced Oporto before any troops could concentrate to oppose him. However, when Baccellar brought up his reserve to the Pavia, and Miller's and Wilson's corps reached Castro d'Airo, Claparede returned to Moimenta de Beira, closely followed by Wilson. Meanwhile, the arrival of the ninth corps having relieved the French troops in Leon, the latter again menaced Tras os Montes, which obliged Silveira to march to Braganza, and as Miller died at Viseu, only Wilson and Trant continued to harass the enemy's parties.

Claparede taking post at Guarda, according to his instructions, seized Covilhao, while Foy, who in returning from France had collected about three thousand infantry and cavalry, convalescents, was marching by the road of Belmonte. Foy had escaped innumerable perils. At Pancorbo he was fain to fly from the partidas, with the loss of his despatches and half his escort; and now at Enxabarda entering the Estrada Nova, notwithstanding Claparede's vicinity, he was harassed by Colonel Grant with a corps of ordenanza from the Lower Beira, and although he suffered nothing by the sword, three hundred of his men died on the mountain from cold. On the 2d of February he reached Santarem, where affairs were coming to a crisis.

During December and January, the country being always more or less flooded, the armies had continued in observation; but Massena's positions were much strengthened, his outposts were reinforced, and his marauding excursions extended in proportion to his increasing necessities. The weak point on either side was towards Rio Mayor; any movement there created great jealousy, especially as the season advanced and the roads became firmer. Hence, on the 19th of January (some reinforcements having landed at Lisbon a few days before) a fear lest the allies should be concentrating at Alcoentre had induced Junot to drive the outposts from Rio Mayor to probe the state of affairs, and a general attack was expected; but after a skirmish he returned with a wound, which disabled him for the rest of the campaign.

Early in February, a column of six thousand French again

scouring all the country beyond the Zezere, got much concealed food near Pedragoa, while other detachments arriving on the Mondego below Coimbra, carried off four hundred oxen and two thousand sheep intended for the allies. These excursions gave rise to horrible excesses, which broke down the discipline of the French army, and were not always executed with impunity; the British cavalry at various times redeemed many cattle, and brought in a considerable number of prisoners, amongst them an aide-de-camp of General Clausel's.

Meanwhile, Massena organized a secret communication with Lisbon, through the Portuguese General Pamplona, who effected it by the help of the fidalgos in that capital: their agents, under the pretence of selling sugar to the inhabitants of Thomar and Torres Novas, passed by the road of Caldas and thence through the mountains of Pedragoa. Lord Wellington, on the other hand, was understood to have gained a French officer of rank, and it is certain that both Generals had excellent information.

In this manner hostilities were carried on, each commander impatiently waiting for reinforcements which should enable him to act offensively. How both were disappointed, and how other events hitherto unnoticed bore upon the plans of each, must be the subject of another book.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. "*War is not a conjectural art.*" Massena, forgetting this, assumed that the allies would not make a stand in front of Lisbon, and that the militia would not venture to attack Coimbra; but the battle of Busaco and the capture of his hospitals evinced the soundness of the maxim. Again, he conjectured that the English would re-embark if pressed: the Lines put an end to that dream; yet once awake, he made war like a great man, proving more formidable with reduced means and in difficulties, than he had been when opportunity was rife and his numbers untouched. His stay at Santarem shows what thirty thousand additional men acting on the left bank of the Tagus could have done. Had they arrived on the heights of Almada before Admiral Berkeley's error was discovered, the supply of provisions from Alemtejo and from Spain would then have been transferred from Lisbon to the French armies; the fleet would have been driven from the Tagus, and the misery of the inhabitants, the fears of the British Cabinet, the machinations of the Patriarch, and the little chance of final success, would probably have induced the British General to embark.

2. It has been observed, that Massena, in the first week, might have easily passed the Tagus, secured the resources of the Alem-

tejo, and driven the British fleet out of the port. This was not so practicable as it might at first sight appear. The rains were heavy; the fords impassable; the French had not boats sufficient for a bridge; a weak detachment would have been useless, a strong detachment would have been dangerous; to collect boats, cast a bridge, and raise the intrenchments necessary to defend it, in the face of the allied forces, would have been neither a safe nor sure operation; moreover, Massena would then have relinquished the certain aid of the ninth for the uncertain assistance of the fifth corps.

3. Lord Wellington, conjecturing the French to be in full retreat, had like to have received a severe check at Santarem; he recovered himself in time, and with this exception, it would be difficult to support essential objections to his operations; yet many have been urged: as, that he might have straitened the enemy's quarters more effectually at Santarem; that Hill's corps, passing through Abrantes, could have destroyed the bridges at Punhete, and lining the Zezere, have cut off Massena's reinforcements, and obliged him to abandon his positions, or even to capitulate. This last idea, advanced at the time by Colonel Squires, an engineer of great zeal and ability, perfectly acquainted with the localities, merits examination.

As a simple operation it was feasible, but the results were not so certain; the lines of Almada being unfinished, the rashness of leaving the Tagus unguarded before an enemy who possessed eighty large boats, exclusive of those forming the bridges on the Zezere, is apparent; Hill's corps must then have been replaced, and the army before Santarem would have been so weak as to invite a concentrated attack, to the great danger of the Torres Vedras Lines. Nor was the forcing of the French works at Punhete a matter of certainty; the ground was strong, there were two bridges over the Zezere, and the sixth corps, being within a short march, might, by passing at Martinchel, have taken Hill in flank.

4. The same officer at a later period, miscalculating the enemy's numbers at thirty thousand men, and the allies at more than seventy thousand regulars, proposed that Beresford should cross the Tagus at Azingha, behind the Almonda, and march upon Golegao, while Lord Wellington, concentrating at Rio Mayor, pushed upon Torres Novas. It was no common head that conceived this project, by which seventy thousand men would, in a single march, have been placed in the midst of the enemy's extended quarters; but the hand of Napoleon could scarcely have launched such a thunder-bolt. Massena had still fifty thousand fighting men; the boats from Abrantes must have been brought down to pass the Tagus; the concentration of troops at Rio Mayor would scarcely have escaped

the enemy's notice, an exact concert, in point of time, was essential. But the eighth corps could have held the allies in check on the Alviella, while Reynier, from Santarem, and Ney, from Thomar, crushed Beresford between the Almonda and the Tagus: moreover the roads about Tremes were nearly impassable from rain during December, and in January, Soult, of whose operations I shall speak in the next book, was menacing the Alemtejo. Any disaster happening to the allies would have relieved the enemy's difficulties, when nothing else could. A campaign is like other works of art; accessories, however splendid, must be rejected when not conducive to the main object. That judgment, which duly classes the value of every feasible operation, is the best quality of a general, and Lord Wellington possessed it in a remarkable degree; to it, his genius and his courage were both subservient; without it, he might have performed many brilliant exploits in the Peninsula, but he could never have conducted the war to a successful end.

## JUSTIFICATORY PIECES.

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[Letter to the Author since the publication of the First Volume.]

*Major-General F. Ponsonby to Colonel Napier.*

AFTER the very handsome manner in which you have mentioned my name, in your account of the battle of Talavera, it may appear extraordinary that I should trouble you with this letter; but my silence might be interpreted into the wish of taking praise to myself which I do not deserve.

The whole of your account of the charge made by General Anson's brigade is substantially correct; you have given the reason for it, and the result; but there are two points, in the detail, which are inaccurate. The first affecting the German hussars; the other respecting myself.

The Germans, on the left of the twenty-third, could not reach the French columns, from the impracticability of the ravine where they charged; this I ascertained, by personal observation, the following day; the obstacle was much less serious where the twenty-third attacked, headed by General Anson and Colonel Seymour. The mountain torrent, which gradually decreased as it descended into the plain, was about thirty yards in front of the enemy, and the twenty-third, though much broken in passing this obstacle, charged up to the columns, and was repulsed, and no rally could be attempted; but the right squadron, under Captain Drake, having an easier passage of the ravine, and no French column immediately in front, passed through the intervals, and caused much confusion, which, together with the delay occasioned by the charge, prevented the masses of infantry which were in readiness on the French right flank, from joining in the general attack on our line.

You will perceive that this account, which I believe to be the exact truth, does not, in the slightest degree, affect the accuracy of your description of the movement; but, if I am correct, it proves that the Germans were obliged to halt by an insuperable difficulty, and that I had no particular merit in the execution of the charge of the twenty-third.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

Malta, Dec. 30, 1829.

F. PONSONBY.

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[Obtained after publication of First Volume.]

*Note sur la Situation actuelle de l'Espagne.*

1°. Les évènements inattendus du Général Dupont sont une preuve de plus que le succès de la guerre dépend de la prudence, de la bonne conduite, et de l'expérience du général.

2°. A la seule lecture du rapport du colonel d'Affry, on avoit diviné tous les évènements ; après une perte aussi considérable, on ne peut être surpris que le roi et les généraux jugent convenable de concentrer l'armée et d'évacuer Madrid.

En examinant avec attention, non les rapports mensongers des individus qui parlent dans leur sens, mais les faits tels qu'ils se sont passés, on est convaincu : premièrement, que le général Castaños n'avoit pas plus de vingt-cinq mille hommes de troupe de ligne et de quinze mille paysans ; un jour on sera à même de vérifier ce qui sera avancé ici. Secondement, que si le général Dupont les eut attaqués, ou se fut battû avec tout son corps réuni, il les eut complètement défaits.

3°. On pense qu'on aura tout le temps d'évacuer les blessés de Madrid qui arrivent à Aranda ; il faudra occuper aussi longtems qu'il sera possible les hauteurs de Buitrago, afin de donner le temps au Maréchal Bessières, de revenir de son mouvement de Gallice ; qu'il faut réorganiser la province de Burgos, les trois Biscayes, et la province de Navarre ; elles comprendront facilement que, dans ce moment plus que jamais, elles doivent rester fidèles et se bien conduire sous peine d'être traitées avec toute la rigueur de la guerre.

4°. On pense que l'armée doit être divisée en trois corps, *le corps principal*, ou de centre, où commande le roi, qu'on porteroit à 30,000 hommes campé à Aranda ; le corps de droite, du Maréchal Bessières, d'environ 15 mille hommes faisant face à ce qui pourroit arriver de Gallice ou d'Estremadure, occupant Valladolid par une division, ayant une autre division intermédiaire avec le corps du centre, et une troisième division de plus sur sa droite, selon les circonstances ; enfin le *corps de gauche*, ou d'Arragon, destiné à maintenir la Navarre et le pays environnant, occupant Logroño et Tudela, et liant sa droite en corps du centre, par une division qui au besoin renforceroit ce corps et devra maintenir Soria par un corps volant.

Les corps du centre et le corps de droite doivent s'appuyer sur Burgos, et le corps d'Arragon doit avoir son appui sur Pampelune.

5°. Pour organiser le corps du centre dans ce but, on croit qu'on doit le renforcer de la brigade du 14<sup>me</sup> et 44<sup>me</sup> de ligne, 200 chevaux et 8 pièces de canon, qu'on tireroit du corps devant Saragosse ; de la brigade du général Mouton composée du 4<sup>me</sup> légère, 15<sup>me</sup> légère, du bataillon de Paris, et de huit pièces de canon ; de la brigade commandée par le maréchal Ney, et qui est déjà à une marche en avant de Bayonne, composée du 43<sup>me</sup>, et du 51<sup>me</sup> de ligne, du 26<sup>me</sup> de chasseurs, et de 6 pièces de canon ; enfin de 4 escadrons de marche de dragons et d'une régiment Polonais de la garde ; on réuniroit le 3<sup>me</sup> bataillon aux deux premiers, de tous les régimens d'infanterie, et on mêleroit les jeunes soldats aux anciens.

On évalue à environ dix mille hommes de renfort que recevrait le corps du centre, qui seroit alors composé : savoir des 18,000 qui le forment à présent .....

Du renfort évalué à..... 18,000

Le détachement du dépôt du 4<sup>me</sup> légère, 15<sup>me</sup> légère..... 10,000

14<sup>me</sup>, 44<sup>me</sup>, 43<sup>me</sup>, et 51<sup>me</sup> de ligne, le 2<sup>me</sup> et 12<sup>me</sup> légère rejoindront insensiblement et porteront ce corps à 30,000 hommes.

Ces trente mille hommes ne sauroient être en meilleures mains, que sous les ordres du Maréchal Ney, hormis une réserve de 4 à 5 mille hommes destinés à la garde du roi, et que le roi conserveroit auprès de sa personne et feroit marcher avec le général Saligny, ou avec le général Savary quand il le jugeroit nécessaire.

Le corps du centre se tiendrait à la hauteur d'Aranda, ses communications