

spread his left to Aranjuez, and was joined by the fourth division, Victor Alten's cavalry, and the detachments quartered about Idefonso and Segovia. On the 8th, hearing of Soult's arrival at Hellin, he pushed his cavalry to Belmonte on the San Clemente road, and found in La Mancha as in Old Castile the stories of French devastation belied by the abundance of provisions. Bassecour, Villa Campa, and the Empecinado then united on the road leading from Cuença to Valencia, while the Medico and other chiefs gathered in the Toledo mountains. The allies were thus extended from Toledo on the right, by Belmonte, Cuença, and Calatayud to near Jaca on the left, and were also in military communication with the coast; for Caffarelli's force was concentrated to relieve Burgos, and Mina had free intercourse with Mendizabel, Renovales and Popham.

Souham, overrating the allied force and dreading defeat as being the only barrier between Wellington and France, far from meditating an advance, expected at first to be attacked; and as the want of provisions would not let him concentrate his army permanently near Monasterio, his dispositions were made to fight on the Ebro. The Minister of War had even desired him to detach a division against the partidas.\* But when, by the English newspapers and by information sent from Paris, he knew that Soult was in march from Granada,—that the King intended to move upon Madrid,—that no English troops had left that capital,—that Wellington's army was not very numerous, and the castle of Burgos sorely pressed, he called up Caffarelli from Vittoria, concentrated his own troops at Briviesca, and resolved to raise the siege.\*

On the 13th a skirmish took place at a stream beyond Monasterio, where Captain Persse of the sixteenth dragoons was twice forced from the bridge and twice recovered it in the most gallant manner, maintaining his post until F. Ponsonby who commanded the reserves arrived. Ponsonby and Persse were both wounded, and this demonstration was followed by various others until the evening of the 18th, when the whole French army was united, and the advanced guard captured a piquet of Brunswickers that had remained in St Oñala against orders. This sudden movement prevented Wellington from occupying the position of Monasterio, and his outposts fell back the 19th to Quintanapala and Olmos, behind which he drew up his army in order of battle,—the right at Ibeas on the Arlanzan,—his centre at Riobena and Majarradas on the main road behind Olmos,—his left thrown back near Soto Palacio on a small river.

\* Duke of Feltre's Correspondence, MS.

† Souham's official Report, MS.

The 20th, Maucune, having two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, drove the allies from Quintanapala, but Olmos was successfully defended by the Chasseurs Britanniques, and Maucune, outflanked on the right, was forced back to Monasterio by two divisions under Sir Edward Paget. There were now in position, including Pack's Portuguese blockading the castle, thirty-three thousand men, namely, twenty-one thousand Anglo-Portuguese infantry and cavalry, eleven thousand Gallicians, and the horsemen of Marquinez and Julian Sanchez; of these four thousand troopers only two thousand six hundred were British and German, and the Spanish horsemen, regular or irregular, could scarcely be counted in the line of battle. The number of guns and howitzers was forty-two, including twelve Spanish pieces ill equipped and scant of ammunition; for though Wellington, who had long felt the want of artillery, sent a memoir upon the subject to the British government in the beginning of the year, his ordnance establishment had not been augmented. Hence his siege difficulties, and instead of ninety British and Portuguese field-pieces, which was the just complement for his army, he had only fifty serviceable guns, of which twenty-four were with Hill; and all were British, for the Portuguese artillery had from the abuses and the poverty of their government entirely melted away. Souham had forty-four thousand men, nearly five thousand being cavalry, and more than sixty guns;\* a matter of no small importance, for besides the actual power, soldiers are excited when the noise is greatest on their side. Wellington stood at disadvantage in numbers, composition, position and real strength. In his rear was Dubreton's castle, whose guns commanded all the fords and bridges of the Arlanzan; his generals of division, Paget excepted, were not of any marked ability, his troops were somewhat desponding and deteriorated in discipline. A victory could scarcely be expected, a defeat would have been destructive; he should not have provoked a battle; nor would he have done so had he known Caffarelli's troops were united to Souham's.

On the other hand, Souham should have forced on an action, because his ground was strong, his retreat open, his army powerful and compact, his soldiers full of confidence; his lieutenants, Clausel, Maucune, and Foy, were of distinguished talent, able to second and able to succeed him in the chief command. The chances of victory and profit to be derived were great, the chances of defeat and dangers to be incurred comparatively small; and it was thus he judged the matter, for Maucune's advance was intended to be the prelude to a great battle.\* But generals are not absolute

\* Official roll of the army given to Massena, MS.

masters of events, and as the extraneous influence which here restrained both sides came from afar, it is fitting to show how in war movements distant and apparently unconnected with those immediately under a general's eye will break his measures, and make him appear undecided or foolish when in truth he is both wise and firm.

While Wellington was still engaged with the siege the Cortes made him commander of all the Spanish armies. He had before refused this responsible situation, but the circumstances were now changed; for the Spaniards, having lost nearly all their cavalry and guns in the course of the war, could not safely act except in connection with the Anglo-Portuguese forces, and it was absolutely necessary that one head should direct. He therefore demanded leave of his own government to accept the offer, observing, however, that the Spanish troops were not improved in discipline, equipments, or military spirit; but he thought that conjoined with the British they might behave well, and so escape more of those terrible disasters which had heretofore overwhelmed the country and nearly brought the war to a conclusion. He was willing to save the dignity of the Spanish government by leaving it a certain body of men wherewith to operate after its own plans; but that he might exercise his own power efficiently and to the profit of the troops under himself, he desired the English government vigorously to insist upon the strict application of the subsidy to the payment of the Spanish soldiers acting with the British army, otherwise the care of the Spanish troops would only cramp his own operations.

To the Cortes, his acceptance of the offer was rendered dependent upon the assent of his own government; and he was careful to guard himself from a danger not unlikely to arise, namely, that the Cortes, when he should finally accept the offer, would in virtue of that acceptance assume the right of directing the whole operations of the war. The intermediate want of power to move the Spanish armies he judged of little consequence, because hitherto his suggestions had been cheerfully attended to by the Spanish chiefs, and he expected no change: he was grievously mistaken.

Previous to this offer, the Spanish government had at his desire directed Ballesteros to cross the Morena and place himself at Alcaraz, in support of the Chinchilla fort, where, joined by Cruz Murgeon, by Elio, and by the partidas, he would have had a corps of thirty thousand men: from thence, while supported by Hill, and having the mountains behind him for a retreat, he could

\* Appendix, 8 A.

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have safely menaced the enemy's flank, and delayed the march against Madrid, or at least have compelled the King to leave a strong corps of observation to watch him. But Ballesteros, swelling with arrogant folly, never moved from Granada; and when he found Wellington was created Generalissimo, published a manifesto appealing to the Spanish pride against the degradation of serving under a foreigner. He thus sacrificed to his own spleen the welfare of his country, but with a result he little expected, for while he judged himself a man to sway the destinies of Spain, he suddenly found himself a criminal and nothing more. The Cortes caused him to be arrested in the midst of his soldiers, who, indifferent to his fate, suffered him to be sent a prisoner to Ceuta. Abisbal was then declared Captain-General of Andalusia, and Del Parque was appointed to command Ballesteros' army, which General Verues immediately led by Jaen towards La Mancha, but the campaign was over then, and Soult was on the Tormes.

That Marshal had joined the King on the 3d of October. His troops required rest, his numerous sick were to be sent to the Valencian hospitals, and his first interview with Joseph was of a warm nature, for each had griefs and passions to exhale. Finally the monarch yielded to the mental power of his opponent, and resolved to profit from his great military capacity, yet reluctantly, and more from prudence than liking;\* for Clarke, the French Minister of War, though secretly Soult's enemy, and believing or pretending to believe the foolish charges of disorderly ambition made against him, was yet opposed to a decided exercise of the King's authority until the Emperor's will was known: this however would not have restrained the King, if Jourdan and Suchet had not each declined accepting chief command when Joseph offered it to them.

Soult's first operation was to reduce Chinchilla, a well-constructed fort, which being in the midst of his quarters, commanded the great roads so as to compel his army to move under its fire, or avoid it by circuitous routes.† A vigorous defence was expected, but on the 6th it fell after a few hours' attack; for a thunderstorm suddenly arising in a clear sky and discharging itself upon the fort, killed the governor and many other persons, whereupon the garrison, influenced it is said by superstitious fear, surrendered. This was the first fruit of Ballesteros' disobedience; for neither could Soult have taken Chinchilla, nor scattered his troops as he did at Albacete, Almanza, Yecla, and Hellin, if thirty thousand Spaniards had been posted between Alcaraz and Chinchilla, sup-

\* Appendix, 6 A.

† Joseph's Correspondence, MS.



ported by thirty thousand Anglo-Portuguese at Toledo under Hill. Those scattered quarters were required to feed the army of the south, which under cover of Chinchilla was thus safely cantoned, while the great convoys of sick, of maimed men and Spanish families, proceeded leisurely to Valencia. The cavalry then scoured La Mancha, and drove Bassecour and Villa Campa to Cuença, but the great operations which succeeded belong to another place; it must here suffice to say that Joseph, having now seventy thousand men, was able to hold Valencia while he advanced towards the Tagus, and that he sent Souham urgent orders to act in concert without risking a battle. Hill also, being thus menaced and reduced by Ballesteros' defection to defend the Tagus when it was becoming fordable in all places, gave notice of the danger to Wellington. Joseph's letter was despatched on the 1st of October, and six others followed in succession, day by day, yet the last, carried by Colonel Lucotte, first reached Souham; the advantages of the allies' central position, and the value of the partidas, were here made manifest. Hill's letter, only despatched the 17th, reached Wellington at the same moment that Joseph's reached Souham. The latter General was thus forced to relinquish his design of fighting on the 20th; nevertheless, having but four days' provisions left, he designed when those should be consumed to attack, notwithstanding the King's prohibition, if Wellington should still confront him.\* But the English General, considering that his own army, already in a very critical situation, would be quite isolated if the King should, as was probable, force the allies from the Tagus, resolved, though with a bitter pang, to raise the siege and retreat so far as would enable him to secure his junction with Hill.

Whilst the armies were in presence some fighting had taken place at Burgos, Dubreton again obtained possession of the San Roman church, but was driven away next morning; and then, the retreat being decided, mines of destruction were formed in the horn-work by the besiegers, and the guns and stores were removed from the batteries to the parc at Villa Toro. But the greatest part of the draught animals had been sent to Reynosa, to meet the powder and artillery coming from Santander, and hence the eighteen-pounders could not be carried off, nor from some error were the mines of destruction exploded. The rest of the stores and howitzers were sent by Villaton and Frandovinez to Cellada del Camino, and the siege was raised after five assaults, several sallies, and thirty-three days' investment, during which the besiegers lost more than two thousand men, and the besieged six hundred in killed or wounded: the French also suffered severely from

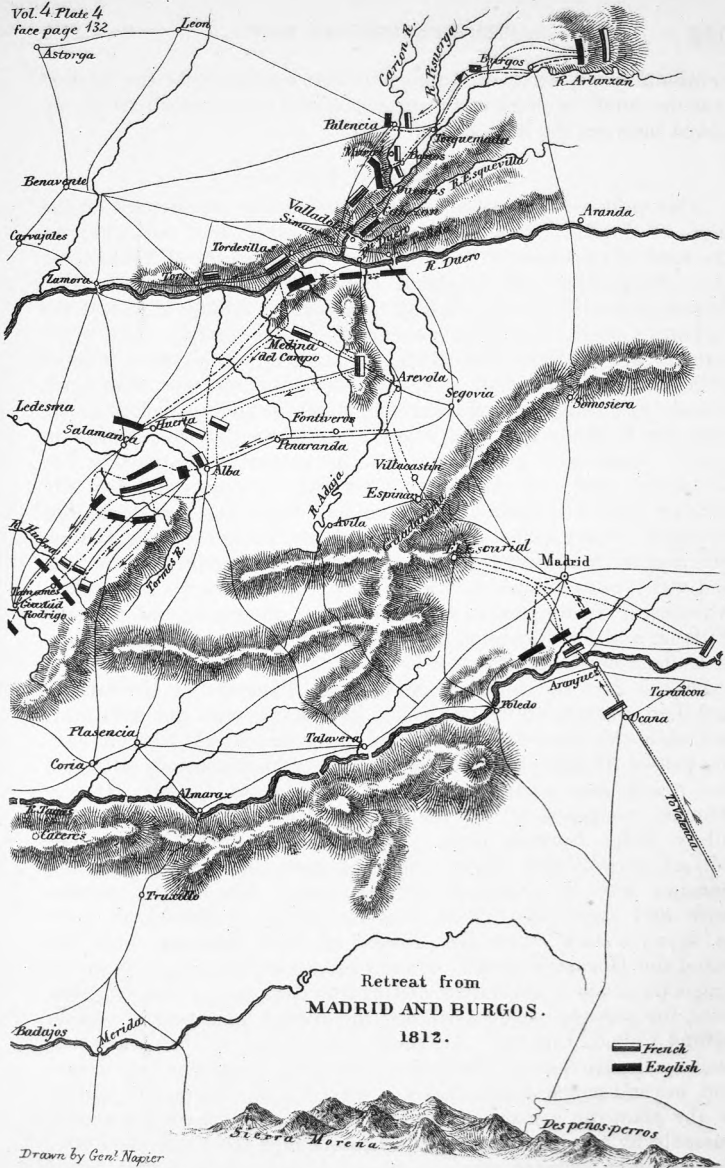
\* Appendix, 8 A.

continual labor, want of water, and bad weather; for the fortress was too small to shelter the garrison, and the greater part bivouacked between the lines of defence.

#### RETREAT FROM BURGOS.

This enforced and remarkable operation was commenced on the night of the 21st by a measure of great nicety and boldness; for the road, divaricating at Gamonal, led to the bridge of Villaton on the one hand, and the bridge of Burgos on the other; and Wellington chose the latter, as being the shortest, though it passed the Arlanzan river, close under the guns of the castle. The army quitted the position after dark, the artillery-wheels were muffled with straw, and defiled over the bridge of Burgos with such silence and celerity, that Dubreton, watchful and suspicious as he was, knew nothing of their march until the partidas, failing in nerve, commenced galloping; then he poured a destructive fire down, but soon lost the range. By this delicate operation, the infantry gained Cellada del Camino and Hormillas that night, but the light cavalry halted at Estepar and the bridge of Villa Baniel. Souham did not discover the retreat until the evening of the 22d, and was fain to follow, and by a forced march overtake the allies, whereas, if Wellington, to avoid the fire of the castle, had gone by Villaton and Frandovinez, the French might have forestalled him at Cellada del Camino.

On the 23d, the infantry crossed the Pisuerga at Cordavillas and Torquemada, above and below its junction with the Arlanzan; but while the main body made this long march, the French, having passed Burgos on the night of the 22d, vigorously attacked the rear-guard, commanded by Sir Stapleton Cotton. It was strongly composed of all the cavalry, two troops of horse-artillery, under Norman Ramsay and Downman, two German battalions, under Colin Halket, and the partidas of Marquinez and Sanchez, who were beyond the Arlanzan. The cavalry piquets were first vigorously driven from the bridge of Baniel as early as seven o'clock; but they rallied on their reserves, and disputed the Hormaza stream, where Captain Persse of the sixteenth dragoons made a charge of distinguished bravery; finally, however, the passage was forced, and the British took post in a plain behind Cellada Camino. On their left, a range of hills was occupied by the partida of Marquinez; on their right was the Arlanzan, beyond which Julian Sanchez was placed. Across the middle of the plain ran a marshy rivulet, cutting the main road, and only passable by a bridge near a little house, called the Venta de Pozo; and half-way between this stream and Cellada there was a broad





ditch with a second bridge, in front of a small village. Cotton retired over the marshy rivulet, leaving Anson's horsemen and Halket's infantry as a rear-guard beyond the ditch; and Anson, to cover his own passage of that obstacle, left the eleventh dragoons and the guns at Cellada Camino, which was situated on a gentle eminence.

#### COMBAT OF VENTA DE POZO.

When the French approached Cellada, Major Money of the eleventh, galloping from the left of the village, at the head of two squadrons, overturned their leading horsemen, and the artillery plied them briskly with shot; but the main body advancing at a trot along the road, outflanked the British, compelling Money to fall back, while the guns retired over the bridge of Venta de Pozo. Meantime the French General Curto, ascending the hill on his right with a brigade of hussars, followed by Boyer's dragoons, put Marquinez' partida to flight. A deep ravine ran along the foot of these hills, it could only be passed at certain places, and towards the first of them the partidas galloped at the moment when the leading French squadrons on the plain were forming in front of Cellada to attack the eleventh regiment. The latter charged, and drove the first line upon the second, but then both lines coming forward together, the eleventh were pushed precipitately over the ditch in confusion, yet with small loss, being covered by the fire of Halket's Germans, who were in the village, behind the bridge. The ditch was now turned by Curto's cavalry on the hills, and Anson fell back, designing to cross the bridge of Venta de Pozo; but then Marquinez' partida came pouring from the hills in flight, pursued by the French hussars, who mixed with the fugitives, and the whole mass dashed on the flank of the sixteenth dragoons, then covering Anson's movements; and at the same moment, the enemy's squadrons, who had meanwhile crossed the ditch, charged. The partida chief was wounded, Colonel Pelly and another officer were taken, with thirty of the eleventh, and the regiment was driven in disorder on the reserves. While the French were re-forming after this charge, Anson got over the rivulet, and drew up beyond it on the left of the road, which was defended by Halket's infantry and the guns, which, being supported by the German heavy cavalry, presented an imposing mass.

Hitherto the action had been sustained by Clausel's cavalry, but now Caffarelli's horsemen, namely, the lancers of Berg, the fifteenth dragoons, and some squadrons of "*gens-d'armes*," all fresh men, came down in line to the rivulet; finding it impassable,

with a quick and daring decision, they wheeled to their right, and despite of the heavy pounding of the artillery, trotted over the bridge, and formed line in opposition to the German dragoons. Their position was dangerous, but they were full of mettle, and though the Germans, who had let too many come over, charged with a rough shock and broke the right, the French left had the advantage, and the others rallied; then began a close and furious sword contest; yet the *gens-d'armes* fought so fiercely, that the Germans, maugre their size and courage, lost ground, and finally gave way in disorder. The French followed on the spur with shrill and eager cries, and Anson's brigade, outflanked and threatened on both sides, fell back also, but not happily, for Boyer's dragoons having continued their march by the hills to the village of Balbaces, had there crossed the ravine and now came thundering in on the left: then the British ranks were broken, the regiments got intermixed, and all went to the rear in confusion; finally, however, the Germans extricated themselves, and formed a fresh line to the left of the road, upon which the others rallied.

The *gens-d'armes* and lancers having suffered severely from the artillery and in the sword-fight, now halted, but Boyer's dragoons, ten squadrons, again came to the charge, and though the German officers rode gallantly forward, and their men followed a short way, the enemy was too powerful, and the swiftness of the English horses alone prevented a terrible catastrophe. Some favorable ground enabled the line to re-form once more; yet it was only to be again broken, and Wellington, who was present, placed Halket's infantry and all the guns in a position to cover the disordered masses. These troops remained tranquil until the enemy came galloping down, when the power of the musket was quickly made manifest; a tempest of bullets emptied the French saddles by scores, and their hitherto victorious horsemen, after three fruitless attempts to charge, each weaker than the other, reined up, and drew off to the hills. The British cavalry, covered by the infantry, then retreated to Quintana la Puente, near the Pisuerga, and the bivouacs of the enemy were established at Villadiego. The loss was considerable on both sides; the French suffered most, but they took a colonel and seventy other prisoners. and before the fight captured a small commissariat store near Burgos.

While the rear-guard was thus engaged, drunkenness and insubordination, the usual concomitants of an English retreat, were exhibited at Torquemada, where the great wine-vaults were invaded, and it is said, twelve thousand men were at one time in a state of helpless inebriety. In this crisis, the English General,



who had now retreated some fifty miles, seeing the enemy so hot and menacing in pursuit, resolved to check his course, because the means of transport being scanty, and the weather bad, the convoys of sick and wounded were still on the wrong side of the Duero. Wherefore, having by a short march crossed the Carrion at its confluence with the Pisuerga, he halted behind it, and was there fortunately joined by a regiment of the guards and by detachments coming from Coruña. His position, extending from Villa Muriel to Dueñas, below the meeting of the waters, was strong, being along a range of hills, lofty, yet descending with an easy sweep to the Carrion, which covered his left, while the Pisuerga secured his right wing. A detachment was employed to destroy the bridge of Baños on the Pisuerga, a battalion of the royals was sent to aid the Spaniards in destroying the bridges at Palencia; and some houses and convents beyond the rivers furnished good posts, behind which the bridges of Muriel and San Isidro on the Carrion, and that of Dueñas on the Pisuerga, could be broken.

Souham, excited by his success, cannonaded the rear-guard at Torquemada, passed the Pisuerga, directed Foy's division upon Palencia, and sent Maucune with an advanced guard against the bridges of Baños, Isidro, and Muriel; but he halted himself at Magoz; and, if fame does not lie, because the number of French drunkards at Torquemada were even more numerous than those of the British army.

#### COMBAT ON THE CARRION.

Before the enemy appeared, the hills were crowned by the allies, the bridges ruined, and that of San Isidro protected by a convent filled with troops. But in the divisional arrangements, the advantage of a dry canal with high banks and parallel to the river was not sufficiently considered, nor was the village of Muriel occupied in sufficient strength. Foy soon reached Palencia, where, according to some French writers, under pretence of a parley, a treacherous attempt was made to kill him; but he drove the allies from the town so hastily, that all the bridges were abandoned undamaged, and the French cavalry crossing, gathered up baggage and prisoners. This untoward event compelled Wellington to throw back his left, composed of the fifth division and Spaniards at Muriel, thus offering two fronts, one facing Palencia, the other the Carrion. Meanwhile, Maucune, first dispersing the 8th caçadores at a ford between San Isidro and Muriel, came with a strong body of infantry and guns upon the latter place, just as a mine was fired to destroy the bridge. The explosion checked

the French, but suddenly a horseman dashing out at full speed, rode down under a flight of bullets, calling out that he was a deserter; he reached the edge of the chasm, violently checked his foaming horse, held up his hands, and exclaiming that he was a lost man, with hurried accents asked if there was no ford. The good-natured soldiers pointed to one, and the gallant fellow looked earnestly for a few moments, as if to fix the exact point, but then wheeling his horse, kissed his hand in derision, and bending over his saddle-bow, dashed back to his own comrades amidst showers of shot and shouts of laughter on both sides. The next moment, Maucune, protected by a concentrated fire of guns, passed the river at the ford thus discovered, and at the bridge by means of ladders; he also made some prisoners in the village, and lined the dry bed of the canal.

But just then, Wellington coming up, turned some guns on the enemy, and desired General Oswald, commanding the fifth division, to retake the village and canal. Oswald expressed a doubt if they could be held when retaken. Wellington, whose retreat was endangered by the enemy's presence, was peremptory; he directed General Barnes with one brigade against the main body, and another under General Pringle to clear the canal. The first body was reinforced with Spaniards and Brunswickers, and a sharp fire of artillery and musketry ensued, but the cannon-shot from the other side of the river plumped heavily into the reserves, the Spaniards got into confusion and were falling back, when their fiery countryman, Miguel Alava, with exhortation and example, for though wounded he would not retire, urged them forward to the fight. Finally the enemy was driven over the river, the village was re-occupied in force, and the canal was strongly lined. Other troops had attempted without success to seize the bridge of San Isidro; there the mine was exploded; but at the bridge of Baños on the Pisuerga the mine failed, and the French cavalry galloping over made both the working and covering party prisoners. This sapped the strength of the position. Souham could assemble his army on the allies' left by Palencia, and force them to action with their back upon the Pisuerga, or he could pass that river by his own left, and forestall them on the Duero at Tudela. If Wellington passed the Pisuerga by the bridge of Dueñas, Souham having the initial move might be first on the ground in front, while Foy's division came down on the rear. If by a rapid movement along the right bank of the Pisuerga he sought to gain the Duero by Cabeçon, which was the next bridge on his rear, Souham, moving along the left bank of the former river, might fall upon him in march, and while hampered between the Duero, the Pisuerga, and

the Esquevilla; and once cut off from the Duero he must have retired through Valladolid and Simancas to Tordesillas or Toro, giving up his communications with Hill. In this critical state of affairs, keeping good watch upon the left of the Pisuerga, and knowing the ground there was rugged, the roads narrow and bad, while on the right bank they were good and wide, he sent his baggage in the night to Valladolid, and withdrawing the troops before daybreak on the 26th, made a clean march of sixteen miles to Cabeçon, passed to the left of the Pisuerga, and barricaded and mined the bridge. Then sending a detachment to hold the bridge of Tudela on the Duero behind him, he caused the seventh division under Lord Dalhousie to secure the bridges of Valladolid, Simancas, and Tordesillas. The Duero was in full water, and being thus assured of a retreat, he again halted, partly because the ground was favorable, partly to give the Commissary-General Kennedy time for indispensable arrangements.

This functionary had gone to England sick in the latter end of 1811, and returned to the army only the day before the siege of Burgos was raised. On his way from Lisbon he found the inexperience of the gentleman acting during his absence had caused serious mischief. The magazines established between Lisbon and Badajos, and from thence by Almaraz to the valley of the Tagus, for the supply of the army in Madrid, had not been removed when the retreat commenced, and Soult would have found them full if his march had been made rapidly on that side: on the other hand, the magazines on the line of operations between Lisbon and Salamanca were nearly empty. He had therefore to remove the magazines south of the Tagus, and bring up stores upon the line of the present retreat. His dispositions were not completed when Wellington desired him to remove the sick and wounded and every other incumbrance from Salamanca, promising to hold his position until the operation was effected. The means were indeed sufficient, but the negligence of many medical and escorting officers conducting the convoys of sick to the rear, and the consequent bad conduct of the soldiers, (for where the officers are careless the soldiers will be licentious,) produced the worst effects. Outrages were perpetrated on the inhabitants along the whole line of march, terror was everywhere predominant, the ill-used drivers and muleteers deserted, some with, some without their cattle, and Kennedy's operation was disastrous. The commissariat lost nearly all the animals and carriages employed, the villages were abandoned, and the under commissaries were bewildered or paralyzed by the terrible disorder thus spread along the line.

Souham repaired the bridges and resumed pursuit the 26th, by

the right of the Pisuerga, deterred probably from taking the left bank by the rugged nature of the ground, and the King's orders not to risk a serious action. Early on the 27th, he was in front of Cabeçon, but contented himself with a cannonade and display of his force. The first cost the allies Colonel Robe of the artillery, a practised officer and a worthy man; the second enabled the English General, for the first time, to count the numbers he had to contend with, and to discover that he could hold neither the Pisuerga nor the Duero permanently. However, his object being to gain time, he still held his position, and when the French, leaving a division in front of Cabeçon, extended their right by Cigales and Valladolid to Simancas, he caused the bridges at the two latter places to be destroyed in succession. Happy that he had not fought in front of Burgos with so powerful an army, he now resolved to go behind the Duero and finally over the Tormes; but as Hill would then be exposed to a flank attack, and the more certainly if ill-fortune befell the troops on the Duero, he ordered him to retreat, giving a discretion as to the line, but desiring him, if possible, to come by the Guadarama passes; for he designed to unite on the Adaja river, and from that central position, if occasion offered, to keep Souham in check with a part of his army, and with the remainder fall upon Soult.

On the 28th, Souham, always intent to dislodge the allies from their position by turning their left, endeavored to force the bridges at Valladolid and Simancas on the Pisuerga, and that of Tordesillas on the Duero. The first was defended by Lord Dalhousie, but Colonel Haket, finding the French strong and eager at the second, destroyed it, and detached the regiment of Brunswick Oels to ruin that of Tordesillas, which was done, and a tower behind the ruins occupied. The remainder of the Brunswickers entered a pine wood some distance off, and when the French arrived, sixty officers and sub-officers headed by Captain Guingret, a daring man, formed a small raft to hold their arms and clothes, and plunged into the water, holding their swords with their teeth, swimming and pushing their raft before them. Under protection of a cannonade they crossed this great river, though it was in full and strong water, and the weather very cold, and having reached the other side, naked as they were, stormed the tower: the Brunswick regiment then abandoned the wood, and the gallant Frenchmen remained masters of the bridge.

When Wellington heard of the attack at Simancas, and had seen the whole French army in march by its right along the hills beyond the Pisuerga the evening of the 28th, he destroyed the bridges at Valladolid and Cabeçon, and crossed the Duero at Tu

dela and Puente de Duero on the 29th. But scarcely had he effected this operation when intelligence of Guingret's splendid action at Tordesillas reached him, and with the decision of a great captain, he instantly marched by his left until he reached the heights between Rueda and Tordesillas; there on the 30th he fronted the enemy, forbidding further progress; for though the bridge had been already repaired by the French, Souham's main body had not arrived, and Wellington's menacing position was too significant to be misunderstood. The bridges of Toro and Zamora were now destroyed by detachments, and though the French commenced repairing the former, the junction with Hill's army was insured. The English General, thinking the bridge of Toro could not be restored for several days, even hoped to maintain the line of the Duero permanently, expecting that Hill, of whose operations it is now time to speak, would be on the Adaja by the 3d of November.

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## CHAPTER V.

The King and Soult advance from Valencia to the Tagus—General Hill takes a position of battle—the French pass the Tagus—Skirmish at the Puente Largo—Hill blows up the Retiro and abandons Madrid—Riot in that city—Attachment of the Madrileños towards the British troops—The hostile armies pass the Guadarama—Souham restores the bridge of Toro—Wellington retreats towards Salamanca and orders Hill to retreat upon Alba de Tormes—The allies take a position of battle behind the Tormes—The Spaniards at Salamanca display a hatred of the British—Instances of their ferocity—Soult cannonades the castle of Alba—The King re-organizes the French armies—Soult and Jourdan propose different plans—Soult's plan adopted—French pass the Tormes—Wellington by a remarkable movement gains the Valmusa river and retreats—Misconduct of the troops—Sir Edward Paget taken prisoner—Combat on the Huebra—Anecdote—Retreat from thence to Ciudad Rodrigo—The armies on both sides take winter cantonments.

### FRENCH PASSAGE OF THE TAGUS.—RETREAT FROM MADRID.

JOSEPH designed to unite great part of Suchet's forces to his own, and Soult, probably influenced by a false report that Ballesteros had actually reached La Mancha, urged this measure. Suchet resisted. He said Valencia must be well defended against the increasing power of the Anglo-Sicilian and Spanish armies at Alicante, because until the French army could open a new line of communication with Zaragoza, Valencia would be the only base. Joseph then resolved to incorporate part of Soult's army with his own, and give the command to Drouet, who was to move by the road of Cuença and Tarancon towards the Tagus. This arrange-

ment, dictated by a desire to advance Drouet's authority, was displeasing to Soult; he urged that his army, so constituted physically and morally as to be the best in the Peninsula, owed its excellence to its peculiar organization, and it would be dangerous to break that up. Nor was there good reason for the change; for if Joseph only wished to be strong on the Cuença road, his own army could be reinforced with one or two divisions, and the whole unite again on the Tagus, without injury to the army of the south. Better, he said, to incorporate the King's army with his, and march altogether by the road of San Clemente, leaving a few troops on the Cuença road, who might be reinforced by Suchet. But if the King's desire was to march in person with a large body, he could do so with greater dignity by joining the army of the south on the main line of operations. Joseph's reply was a peremptory order to obey or retire to France, and Drouet marched to Cuença.

Soult had thirty-five thousand infantry, six thousand excellent cavalry and seventy-two guns, making, with the artillerymen, a total of forty-six thousand veteran combatants.\* The King's army, including the guards, was twelve thousand, two thousand being cavalry with twelve guns. Thus fifty-eight thousand fighting men and eighty-four pieces of artillery were in motion to drive Hill from the Tagus.† Joseph designed to pass that river and operate against Wellington's rear if he should continue the siege of Burgos; but if he concentrated on the Tagus, Souham was to menace his rear by Aranda de Duero and the Somosierra; sending detachments towards Guadalaxara, to be met by other detachments coming from the King through Sacedon. Finally, if Wellington, as indeed happened, should abandon both Burgos and Madrid, the united French forces were to drive him into Portugal.‡

The march of Soult's sick convoys to Valencia, and other difficulties, retarded the movement, and the King became uneasy for his supplies; because the people of La Mancha, still remembering Montbrun's devastations, were again flying with their beasts and grain, and from frequent repetition were become exceedingly expert in evading the researches of the foragers. Such however is the great advantage of discipline and order, that while La Mancha was thus desolate from fear, confidence and tranquillity reigned in Valencia. Joseph marched on the 18th upon Cuença, where he found Drouet with a division of Soult's infantry and some cavalry. He then proceeded by Tarancon, the only artillery road on that side leading to the Tagus, while Soult moved by San Clemente

\* Imperial Muster rolls, MS.

† Joseph's Correspondence, MS.

‡ Official Papers, French Bureau de la Guerre, MS.



upon Ocaña and Aranjuez. Hill immediately sent that notice to Wellington which caused the retreat from Burgos, and concentrated his own forces on the Tagus; his right was at Toledo, his left at Fuente Dueñas; and there were Spanish and Portuguese troops in the valley of the Tagus as far as Talavera. The Tagus was however fordable from its junction with the Jarama near Aranjuez upwards; and this line could not easily be supported, as the troops would have been too distant from the point of action if the French operated against Toledo. Hill therefore drew his left behind the Tajuna, which is a branch of the Jarama running nearly parallel to the Tagus; his right occupied strong ground from Añover to Toledo, he destroyed the bridges at Aranjuez, and securing that below the confluence of the Jarama and Henares, called the Puente Larga, threw one of boats over the former river a little above Bayona. The light division and Elio's troops, on the extreme left, then marched upon Arganda, Skerrett's brigade arrived from Cadiz, and including the Spanish regulars, forty thousand men were in line, while a multitude of partidas hovered about. The lateral communications were easy, the scouts, passing over the bridge of Toledo, covered all the country beyond the Tagus, and the bridges at each end of the line furnished means to sally upon the flanks of a force attacking the front: it required several marches to force the right, and on the left the Jarama with its marshy banks and many confluent offered positions for interposing between the enemy and Madrid.

Drouet passed the Tagus the 29th at the abandoned fords of Fuente Dueñas and Villa Maurique; the King went with his guards to Zarza de la Cruz; and Soult, whose divisions were coming fast up to Ocaña, restored the bridge of Aranjuez, and passed with his advanced guard. On the 30th he attacked Cole at the Puente Larga; the mines failed, and the French attempted to carry the bridge with the bayonet, but were vigorously repulsed by the forty-seventh under Skerrett; after a heavy cannonade and a sharp musketry which cost the allies sixty men, the attempt was relinquished. Had the Puente Larga been forced, the fourth division which was at Añover would have been cut off from Madrid; but the weather being thick and rainy. Soult could not discover what supporting force was on the high land of Valdemoro behind the bridge, and was afraid to push forward too fast.\* Discontented with this caution Joseph designed to operate by Toledo, but during the night the Puente Larga was abandoned, and Soult, still in doubt of Hill's real object, advised Joseph to unite the army of the centre at Arganda and Chinchon, throwing bridges for re-

\* Soult's Correspondence with the King, MS.

treat at Villa Maurique and Fuente Dueñas as a precaution in case a battle should take place. Hill's movement was however a decided retreat, which would have commenced twenty-four hours sooner but for the failure of the mines and the combat at the Puente Larga, for the order to retreat had reached him when Soult first appeared on the Tagus; and the affair was so sudden, that the light division, which had just come from Alcala to Arganda to close the left, was compelled to return again without halting in the night, a march of forty miles.

Hill had a discretionary power to retire by the valley of the Tagus or the Guadarama; a position in the former taken on the flank of the enemy would have prevented the King from passing the Guadarama, and at the same time have covered Lisbon; a retreat by the Guadarama exposed Lisbon; but thinking the valley of the Tagus in that advanced season would not support the French army, and knowing Wellington to be pressed by superior forces, he chose the Guadarama. Wherefore, burning his pontoons and causing La China and the stores remaining there to be blown up in the night of the 30th, he retreated by different roads, and united his army the 31st near Majadahonda. This movement uncovered the magazines, so negligently left along the line of communication to Badajos; the enemy could have sent men to seize them; nor were the removal and destruction of the stores in Madrid effected without disorders of a singular nature. The municipality demanded all the provision remaining there, as if for the enemy, and when refused excited a mob to attack the magazines; firing even took place, and the fourth division was called in to restore order. Some wheat being finally given to the poorest of the people, Madrid was abandoned, and it was affecting to see the earnest and true friendship of the population. Men, women, and children, crowding around the troops, bewailed their departure, and moving with them in one vast mass for more than two miles left their houses empty when the French cavalry scouts were at the gates on the other side. This emotion was distinct from political feeling, because there was a very strong French party in Madrid, and among the causes of wailing, the return of the plundering and cruel partidas unchecked by the presence of the British was very loudly proclaimed. The Madrileños have been stigmatized as a savage and faithless people: the British army found them patient, gentle, generous and loyal. Nor is this fact to be disputed because of the riot which occurred in the destruction of the magazines; for the provisions had been obtained by requisition from the country around Madrid, under an agreement with the Spanish government to pay at the end of the war; and it was natural for the people, excited

as they were by the authorities, to endeavor to get their own flour back rather than have it destroyed when they were starving.

With the Anglo-Portuguese troops marched Penne Villemur, Morillo and Carlos d'España; and it was Wellington's wish that Elio, Bassecour and Villa Campa should throw themselves into the valley of the Tagus, cross the bridge of Arzobispo, and join Ballesteros' army under Virues. A great body of men, including the Portuguese regiments left by Hill in Estremadura, would thus have been placed on the flank of any French army marching upon Lisbon; and if the enemy neglected this line the Spaniards could operate against Madrid or against Suchet at pleasure. Elio however, being cut off from Hill by the French advance, remained at the bridge of Auñion near Sacedon, and was there joined by Villa Campa and the Empecinado. Soult meanwhile brought up his army as quickly as possible to Valdemoro, and his information as to Hill's real force was becoming more distinct; but there was also a rumor that Wellington was close at hand with three British divisions, and the French Marshal's movements were consequently cautious, lest he should find himself suddenly engaged in battle before his whole force was collected; for his rear was still at Ocaña, and the army of the centre had not yet passed the Tajuna. This disposition of his troops was probably intentional to prevent the King from fighting; for Soult did not think this a fitting time to fight a battle unless upon great advantage. In the disjointed state of their affairs a defeat would have been more injurious to the French than a victory would have been beneficial; the former would have lost Spain, the latter would not have gained Portugal.

On the 1st of November, the bulk of the army being assembled at Getafé, Soult sent scouting parties in all directions to feel for the allies and to ascertain the direction of their march; the next day the army of the centre joined him not far from Madrid, but Hill was then in full retreat for the Guadarama, covered by a powerful rear-guard under Cole. Soult pursued on the 3d, and the King entering Madrid placed a garrison in the Retiro for the protection of his court and of the Spanish families attached to his cause; hitherto moving in one great convoy they had impeded all the movements of the army of the centre, but being now disposed of, Joseph rejoined Soult at the Guadarama with his guards, which always moved as a separate body. He had left Palombini beyond the Tagus near Tarancon to scour the roads on the side of Cuença, but some dragoons sent towards Huerta were surprised by the partidas and lost forty men, whereupon Palombini rejoined the army.

Hill was moving upon Arevalo, when fresh orders founded on new combinations changed the direction of his march. Souham

had repaired the bridge of Toro the 4th, several days sooner than was expected, and thus Wellington, while watching to join Hill on the Adaja, was again baffled; that movement could not then be made lest Souham should from Toro and Tordesillas follow the rear. Nor, if Hill came up, could Souham be attacked for want of means to pass the Duero, and Soult would then reach the Tormes. In fine, the allies' central position being no longer available, General Hill was ordered to gain Alba de Tormes at once by the way of Fontiveros, and on the 6th Wellington also fell back to San Christoval in front of Salamanca.

Joseph, thinking to prevent the junction of the allies, had gained Arevalo by the Segovia road the 5th, Souham's scouts were met with at Medina del Campo the 8th, and for the first time since he had quitted Valencia the King obtained news of the army of Portugal. One hundred thousand combatants, twelve thousand being cavalry with a hundred and thirty pieces of artillery, were thus assembled on those plains over which, three months before, Marmont had marched with so much confidence to his own destruction. Soult, then expelled from Andalusia by Marmont's defeat, was now, after having made half the circuit of the Peninsula, come to drive into Portugal that very army whose victory had driven him from the south; and, as Wellington had foreseen and foretold, the recovery of Andalusia, politically important and useful as it was, proved injurious to himself; it had concentrated a mighty power to escape from which both skill and fortune were necessary; and the Spanish armies, let loose by this union of all the French troops, kept aloof, or coming to aid were found a burthen.

On the 7th Hill passed the Tormes at Alba and mined the bridge, the light division and Long's cavalry remaining on the right bank during the night. Wellington held San Christoval, and the King, even at this late period, was doubtful if Ballesteros' troops had or had not joined the allied army at Avila.\* Wellington also was uncertain of the King's numbers, but designed to maintain the Tormes permanently and give his troops repose. He had retreated two hundred miles, and Hill had retired the same distance besides his march from Estremadura. Skerrett had come from Cadiz, and all required rest, for the soldiers, especially those who besieged Burgos, had been in the field with scarcely an interval of repose since January; the infantry were barefooted, their equipments spoiled, the cavalry weak, the horses out of condition, the discipline of all failing. The excesses committed on the Burgos line have been shown, and during the first day's march from the Tagus, five hundred of the rear-guard under Cole, chiefly of one

\* Joseph's Correspondence, MS.

regiment, finding the inhabitants had fled according to custom, whichever side was approaching, broke open the houses, plundered and got drunk; a multitude were left in the cellars of Valdemoro, and two hundred and fifty fell into the hands of the enemy. The rest of the retreat being unmolested was made with more regularity, but the excesses still committed furnished glaring evidence that the moral conduct of a general cannot be fairly judged by following in the wake of a retreating army. There was no want of provisions, no hardships to exasperate the men, and yet the author of this history counted on the first day's march from Madrid seventeen bodies of murdered peasants; by whom killed, or for what, whether by English or Germans, by Spaniards or Portuguese, in dispute, in robbery or in wanton villany, was unknown; but their bodies were in the ditches, and a shallow observer might thence have drawn foul and false conclusions against the English General and nation.

Another notable thing was the discontent of the veteran troops with the staff officers. The assembling of the sick men at the place and time prescribed to form the convoys was punctually attended to by the regimental officers,—not so by the others, nor by the commissaries who had charge to provide the means of transport,—hence delay and great suffering to the sick, and the wearing out of healthy men's strength by waiting with their knapsacks on for the negligent. When the light division was left on the right bank of the Tormes to cover the passage at Alba, a prudent order that all baggage or other impediments should pass rapidly over the narrow bridge at that place without halting on the enemy's side, was, by those charged with the execution, so rigorously interpreted as to deprive the troops of their ration bullocks and flour mules at the very moment of distribution; and the tired soldiers, thus absurdly denied food, had the further mortification to see a string of commissariat carts deliberately passing their post many hours afterwards. All regimental officers know that discontent thus created is most hurtful to discipline, and it is in these particulars the value of a good and experienced staff is found.

Wellington's position extended from Christoval to Aldea Lengua on the right bank of the Tormes, and on the left of that river to the bridge of Alba, where the castle which was on the right bank was garrisoned by Howard's brigade of the second division. Hamilton's Portuguese were on the left bank as a reserve for Howard; the remainder of the second division watched the fords of Huerta and Enciña, and behind them the third and fourth divisions occupied the heights of Calvariza de Ariba. The light division and the Spanish infantry entered Salamanca, the cavalry were disposed beyond the Tormes, covering all the front. The heights of Chris-

toval were strong and compact, the position of the Arapiles on the other side of the Tormes glorious as well as strong; and the bridge of Salamanca and the fords furnished the power of concentrating on either side of that river by a shorter line than the enemy could move upon.

However, while desirous to fight, the English General looked also to retreat; he sending his sick to the rear, brought up small magazines from Rodrigo to intermediate points, caused the surplus ammunition at Salamanca to be destroyed by small explosions, and delivered large stores of clothing, arms, and equipments to the Spaniards, who were thus completely furnished; but in an hour after they were selling their accoutrement under his own windows! Salamanca presented indeed an extraordinary scene, and the Spaniards, civil and military, evinced hatred of the British. Daily did they attempt or perpetrate murder, and one act of peculiar atrocity merits notice. A horse led by an English soldier being frightened backed against a Spanish officer commanding at a gate; he caused the soldier to be dragged into his guard-house, and there bayoneted him in cold blood; and no redress could be had for this or other crimes, save by counter-violence, which was not long withheld. A Spanish officer while wantonly stabbing at a rifleman was shot dead by the latter; and a British volunteer slew a Spanish officer at the head of his own regiment in a sword-fight, the troops of both nations looking on.

The civil authorities, not less savage, were more insolent than the military, treating every English person with an intolerable arrogance. Even the Prince of Orange was like to have lost his life; for upon remonstrating about quarters with the sitting junta, they ordered one of their guards to kill him; and he would have been killed had not Lieutenant Steele of the forty-third, a bold athletic person, felled the man before he could stab; yet both the Prince and his defender were forced to fly from the soldier's comrades. The exasperation caused by these things was leading to serious mischief when the enemy's movements gave another direction to the soldiers' passions.

On the 9th Long's cavalry had been driven in upon Alba, and next day Soult sent some skirmishers forward and opened eighteen guns against that place. The castle, crowning a bare rocky knoll hastily intrenched, scarcely gave shelter from this tempest, and for two hours the garrison could only reply with musketry; but finally it was aided by four pieces from the left bank of the river, and the post was defended with such vigor the enemy dared not assault. During the night Hamilton reinforced the garrison, repaired the damaged walls and formed barricades, and in the morning after a



short cannonade the enemy withdrew. This combat cost the allies a hundred men.

On the 11th the King re-organized the army, giving Soult command of the whole, and removing Souham to make way for Drouet. Caffarelli then returned to Burgos with his divisions and guns, and as Souham had left garrisons in Toro, Tordesillas, Zamora, and Valladolid, and the King one in the Retiro, only ninety thousand combatants remained on the Tormes; but twelve thousand were cavalry, nearly all were veteran troops, and they had one hundred and twenty pieces of artillery. Such a mighty power could not remain idling. The country was exhausted, the soldiers wanted bread, and Joseph, eager to fight, for he was of a brave spirit and had something of his brother's greatness of soul, sought counsel how to deliver battle with most advantage. Jourdan, with a martial fire unquenched by age, was for bringing affairs to a crisis by the boldest and shortest mode. He observed that Wellington's position was composed of three parts, the right at Alba, the centre at Calvariza de Ariba, the left separated by the Tormes from the centre at San Christoval. The whole distance was about fifteen miles, and the Tormes was fordable in many places above Salamanca; wherefore he proposed to assemble the French army in the night, pass the river at daybreak, by the fords between Villa Gonzalo and Huerta, and make a concentrated attack upon Calvariza de Ariba, which would force on a decisive battle.\*

Soult objected to attack Wellington in a position he was so well acquainted with, which he might have fortified, and where the army must fight its way even from the fords to gain room for an order of battle.† He proposed, instead, to move by the left to certain fords, three in number, between Exéme and Galisancho, some seven or eight miles above Alba de Tormes; easy in themselves, they were suited from the conformation of the banks for forcing a passage if it should be disputed, and by a slight circuit the troops in march could not be seen by the enemy. Passing there, the French army would gain two marches upon the allies, be placed on their flank and rear, and could fight on ground chosen by its own generals instead of delivering battle on ground chosen by the enemy; or it could force on an action in a new position whence the allies could with difficulty retire in the event of disaster. Wellington must then fight to disadvantage, or retire hastily, sacrificing part of his army to save the rest; and the effect, military and political, would be the same as if he was beaten by a front attack. Jourdan replied, that this was prudent and might be successful if Wellington ac-

\* Appendix 9.

† French official Correspondence, MS.

cepted battle, but he could not thereby be forced to fight, which was the great object; he would have time to retreat before the French could reach the line of his communications with Ciudad Rodrigo; and it was supposed by some of the generals he would retreat to Almeida at once by San Felices and Barba de Puerco.

Neither Soult nor Jourdan knew the position of the Arapiles in detail, and the former, though he urged his own plan, offered to yield if the King was so inclined.\* Jourdan's proposition was supported by all the generals of the army of Portugal except Clausel, who leaned to Soult's opinion; but as that Marshal commanded two-thirds of the army while Jourdan had no ostensible command, the question was finally decided agreeably to his counsel. Nor is it easy to determine which was right, for though Jourdan's reasons were strong and the result was conformable to his views and contradictory of Soult's, the failure was in the execution. Nevertheless it would seem that so great an army and so confident, for the French soldiers eagerly demanded battle, should have grappled in the shortest way. A rapid development of Jourdan's plan would probably have cut off Hamilton's Portuguese and the brigade in the castle of Alba from Calvariza Ariba. On the other hand, Wellington desired a battle on either side of the Tormes. His hope was indeed to prevent the passage of that river until the rains rendered it unfordable, and thus force the French to retire from want of provisions, or to engage him on the position of Christoval; yet he also courted a fight on the Arapiles, those rocky monuments of his former victory. He had sixty-eight thousand combatants, fifty-two thousand of which, including four thousand British cavalry, were Anglo-Portuguese, and he had nearly seventy guns.† This force was so disposed, that besides Hamilton's Portuguese, three divisions guarded the fords, which were also defended by intrenchments, and the whole army might have been united in good time upon the ridges of Calvariza Ariba and the two Arapiles, where the superiority of fifteen thousand men would not have availed the French much. A defeat would only have sent the British to Portugal, a victory would have taken them once more to Madrid. To draw in Hamilton's Portuguese and the troops from the Alba in time would have been the vital point; but as the French, if they did not surprise the allies, must have fought up from the river, this danger might have proved less than it seemed. In fine the general was Wellington, and he knew his ground.

\* Letter to the King, MS.

† Letter to Lord Liverpool, MS.

FRENCH PASSAGE OF THE TORMES.—RETREAT TO CIUDAD  
RODRIGO.

Soult's plan being adopted, the army of Portugal was directed to make frequent demonstrations against Christoval, Aldea Lengua, and the fords between Huerta and Alba; the road over the hills to the Galisancho fords was repaired, and two trestle-bridges were constructed for the passage of the artillery. The united armies of the south and centre were to pass at Galisancho, and if the allies withdrew from Alba de Tormes, Drouet was to pass there by the bridge and by the fords, and assail their rear; but if they maintained Alba he was to follow Soult's movement.

At daybreak on the 14th the bridges were thrown, the cavalry and infantry passed by the fords, the allies' outposts were driven back, and Soult took a position at Mozarbes, having the road from Alba to Tamames under his left flank. Wellington remained too confidently in Salamanca, and when the first report said the enemy were over the Tormes, made the caustic observation that he would not recommend it to some of them. Soon however other reports convinced him of his mistake. He galloped to the Arapiles, and having ascertained the direction of Soult's march, drew off the second division, the cavalry, and some guns to attack the head of the French column. The fourth division and Hamilton's Portuguese remained at Alba to protect this movement; the third division secured the Arapiles rocks until the troops from San Christoval should arrive; and he was still so confident of driving the French back over the Tormes, that the bulk of the troops did not quit San Christoval that day. But when he reached Mozarbes, the French were already too strong to be seriously meddled with; and when under cover of a cannonade he examined their position, extending from Mozarbes to the heights of Nuestra Señora de Utiero, he found it so good there was no remedy; wherefore, drawing off the troops from Alba and destroying the bridge, he left three hundred Spaniards in the castle, with orders if the army retired the next day, to abandon the place and save themselves as they best could.

During the night and following morning the allied army was united in the position of the Arapiles, and it was still hoped the French would give battle there; but the first division was placed at Aldea Tejada, on the Junguen stream, to secure that passage in case of retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo. Drouet, finding the bridge of Alba broken and the castle occupied, had meantime crossed at Galisancho and taken post on the ridge of Señora de Utiero; and Soult, who had commenced fortifying Mozarbes, extended his left

at the same time to the height of Señora de la Buena near the Rodrigo road; yet slowly, for the ground was heavy, and the many sources of the Junguen and Valmusa being filled by rain impeded his march. This evolution was nearly the same as that practised by Marmont, but it was on a wider circle, by a second range of heights inclosing as it were those by which the Duke of Ragusa moved, and beyond the reach of such a sudden attack and catastrophe. The result in each case was remarkable. Marmont, closing with a short quick turn, a falcon striking at an eagle, received a buffet that broke his pinions and spoiled his flight. Soult, a wary kite, sailing slowly and with a wide wheel to seize a helpless prey, lost it altogether.

About two o'clock, Wellington, too weak to attack, and seeing the French cavalry pointing to the Ciudad Rodrigo road, thought the King wished to establish a fortified head of cantonments at Mozarbes, and then operate against the allies' communication with Rodrigo; wherefore, suddenly casting his army into three columns, he crossed the Junguen, and then covering his left flank with his cavalry and guns, defiled in order of battle before the enemy at little more than cannon-shot. With a wonderful boldness and facility, and good fortune also, for there was a thick fog and a heavy rain which rendered the by-ways and fields by which the enemy moved nearly impassable, while the allies had the use of the high-roads, he carried his whole army in one mass quite round the French left: thus he gained the Valmusa river, and halted at night in rear of those who had been threatening him in front a few hours before. This exploit, foretold by Jourdan, was certainly surprising, but it was not creditable to the generalship on either side; for first it may be asked why the English commander, having somewhat carelessly suffered Soult to pass the Tormes and turn his position, waited so long on the Arapiles as to render this dangerous movement necessary,—a movement which bad roads, bad weather, and want of vigor on the other side, rendered possible, and no more.

It has been said the drawback to Soult's genius is want of promptness in seizing the decisive moment. It is a great thing to fight a great battle, and against such a general as Wellington, and such troops as the British, a man may well be excused if he thinks twice ere he puts his life and fame, and the lives and fame of thousands of his countrymen, the weal or woe of nations, upon the hazard of an event which may be decided by the existence of a ditch five feet wide, or the single blunder of a single fool, or the confusion of a coward, or by any other circumstance, however trivial. It is no mean consideration, that the praise or the hatred of nations,

universal glory, or universal, perhaps eternal contempt, waits on an action, the object of which may be more safely gained by other means, for in war there is infinite variety. And here Soult certainly vacillated after passing the Tormes, purposely perhaps, to avoid an action; holding it unwise, in the disjointed state of French affairs, and when without any fixed base or reserves in case of defeat, to fight a decisive battle. Nor is this prudence blamable, for though he who would be great in war must be daring, to set all upon one throw belongs only to an irresponsible chief, not to a lieutenant whose task is but a portion of the general plan; neither is it wise in monarch or general to fight when all may be lost by defeat, unless all may be won by victory. The King, more unfettered than Soult, desired a battle, and with an army so good and numerous, the latter's prudence seems misplaced; he should have grappled with his enemy, for once engaged at any point the allies could not have retreated, and there were ninety thousand men to fight less than seventy thousand.

On the 16th the allies retired by the three roads which lead across the Matilla stream through Tamames, San Munos, and Martin del Rio; the light division and the cavalry closed the rear, and the country was a forest penetrable in all directions. The troops bivouacked in the evening behind the Matilla stream, and the march was only twelve miles, yet the stragglers were numerous; for the soldiers, meeting with vast herds of swine, quitted their colors by hundreds to shoot them, and such a rolling musketry echoed through the forest it was thought the French were attacking. It was in vain the staff officers endeavored to stop this disgraceful practice, which had indeed commenced the evening before; in vain that two offenders were hanged; the hungry soldiers still broke from the columns, the property of whole districts was swept away in a few hours, and the army was in some degree placed at the mercy of the enemy. The latter, however, were contented to glean the stragglers, of whom they captured two thousand; they did not press the rear until near Matilla, where their lancers fell on, but were checked by the light companies of the twenty-eighth, and afterwards charged by the fourteenth dragoons.

On the 17th a different yet a not less curious scene occurred. During the night the cavalry in front of the light division had, for some unknown reason, filed off by the flanks to the rear without giving any information to the infantry, who, trusting to the horsemen, had thrown out their piquets at a very short distance in front.

At daybreak the soldiers were putting on their accoutrements, when some strange horsemen being seen in the rear of the bivouac, were mistaken for Spaniards; but very soon their cautious move-



ments and vivacity of gestures showed them to be French; the troops then ran to arms, and in good time, for five hundred yards in front the wood opened on to a large plain where, in place of the British cavalry, eight thousand French horsemen were discovered advancing in one solid mass, yet carelessly and without suspecting the vicinity of the allies. The division was immediately formed in columns, a squadron of the fourteenth dragoons and one of the German hussars came hastily up from the rear, Julian Sanchez' cavalry appeared in small parties on the right flank, and every precaution was taken to secure the retreat. This checked the enemy, but as the infantry fell back, the French, though fearing to approach them in the wood, sent squadrons to the right and left, some of which rode on the flanks near enough to bandy wit in the Spanish tongue with the English soldiers, who marched without firing. Very soon, however, the signs of mischief appeared, the road was strewn with baggage, the bat-men came running in for protection, some wounded, some without arms, and all breathless, as just escaped from a surprise. The thickness of the forest had enabled the French to pass along unperceived on the flanks of the line of march; and, as opportunity offered, they galloped from side to side, sweeping away the baggage and sabring the conductors and guards; they even menaced one of the columns, but were checked by the fire of the artillery. In one of these charges General Paget was carried off from the midst of his own men, and it might have been Wellington's fortune, for he also was continually riding between the columns and without an escort.

Soon, however, the main body passed the Huebra and took position, the right at Tamames, the left near Boadilla, the centre at San Munos, Buena Barba, and Gallego de Huebra. But when the light division arrived at the edge of the table-land which overhangs the fords at the last named place, the French cavalry suddenly thickened, and the sharp whistle of musket-bullets, with the splintering of branches on the left, showed that their infantry was also up. Soult, in the hope of forestalling the allies at Tamames, had pushed his columns towards that place by a road leading from Salamanca through Vecinos; but finding Hill's troops in his front, he turned short to his right in hopes to cut off Wellington's rear-guard, which led to the

#### COMBAT OF THE HUEBRA.

Warned by the musketry, the cavalry crossed the fords in time, and the light division should have followed without delay, because the forest ended on the edge of the table-land, and the descent from thence to the river, eight hundred yards, was open, and the fords



of the Huebra deep. Instead of this an order was given to form squares, and the officers looked at each other in amazement; but at that moment Wellington fortunately appeared, and under his directions the battalions instantly glided off to the fords, leaving four companies of the forty-third, and one of the riflemen, to cover the passage. These companies, spreading as skirmishers, were assailed in front and both flanks with a fire showing that a large force was before them; moreover, a driving rain and mist prevented them from seeing their adversaries, and being pressed closer each moment, they gathered by degrees at the edge of the wood, where they maintained their ground for a quarter of an hour; then seeing the division was beyond the river, they swiftly cleared the open slope of the hill and passed the fords under a sharp musketry. Only twenty-seven soldiers fell, for the tempest beating in the Frenchmen's faces baffled their aim, and Ross's guns playing from the low ground with grape checked the pursuit; but the deep bellowing of thirty pieces of heavy French artillery showed how critically timed was the passage.

Steep and broken were the banks of the Huebra, and the enemy spread his infantry to the right and left along the edge of the forest, making demonstrations on every side, and there were several fords to be guarded; the fifty-second and the Portuguese defended those below, Ross's guns, supported by the riflemen and forty-third, defended those above, and behind the right, on higher ground, was the seventh division. The second division, Hamilton's Portuguese, and a brigade of cavalry, were in front of Tamames, and thus the bulk of the army was massed on the right, hugging the Pena de Francia, and covering the roads leading to Ciudad, as well as those leading to the passes of the Gata hills. In this situation an attempt to force the fords guarded by the fifty-second was vigorously repulsed, yet the skirmishing and cannonade continued until dark, and heavily the French guns played upon the light and seventh divisions. The former, forced to keep near the fords in column, lest a sudden rush of cavalry should take the guns on the flat ground, were plunged into at every round, yet suffered little loss, because the saturated clayey soil swallowed the shot and smothered the shells; but it was a matter of astonishment to see the seventh division kept in one huge mass by Lord Dalhousie on open and hard ground, thus tempting havoc for several hours, when, only a hundred yards in its rear, the rise of the hill and the thick forest would have sheltered it without at all weakening the position.

On the 18th the army was to have drawn off before daylight, and the English General was disquieted, because the position,

though good for defence, was difficult to remove from at that season. The roads, hollow and narrow, led up a steep bank to a table-land which was open, flat, marshy, and scored with water-gullies; and from the overflowing of one of the streams the principal road was impassable a mile in rear of the position; hence to bring the columns off in time without jostling, and without being attacked, required nice management. All the baggage and stores had marched in the night, with orders not to halt until they reached the high lands near Ciudad Rodrigo; but if the preceding days had produced some strange occurrences, the 18th was not less fertile in them.

In a former part of this work it has been stated that even the successes and long confirmed reputation of Wellington could not protect him from the vanity and presumption of subordinate officers. The allusion fixes here. Knowing the direct road was impassable, he ordered the movement by another road longer and apparently more difficult; this seemed so extraordinary to some general officers, that, after consulting together, they deemed their commander unfit to conduct the army, and led their troops by what appeared to them the fittest line of retreat! He had before daylight placed himself at an important point on his own road, and waited impatiently for the arrival of the leading division until dawn; then suspecting what had happened, he galloped to the other road and found the would-be commanders stopped by water. The insubordination and the danger to the army were alike glaring, yet the practical rebuke was so severe and well-timed, the humiliation so complete and so deeply felt, that with one proud sarcastic observation, indicating contempt more than anger, he led back the troops and drew off all his forces safely. Some confusion and great danger still attended the operation, for even on his road one water gully was so deep that the light division, bringing up the rear, could only pass it man by man over a felled tree, and it was fortunate that Soult, unable to feed his troops, stopped on the Huebra and only sent some cavalry to Tamames. The retreat was unmolested, but whether from necessity or negligence in the subordinates many wounded men, most of them hurt by cannon-shot, were left behind, the enemy never passed the Huebra, and the miserable creatures perished by a horrible and lingering death.

The marshy plains now to be passed exhausted the strength of the tired soldiers, thousands straggled, the depredations on the herds of swine were repeated, and the temper of the army generally prognosticated the greatest misfortunes if the retreat should be continued. This was however the last day of trial; the weather cleared up, some hills afforded dry bivouacs and fuel, the distribu-

tion of good rations restored the strength and spirits of the men, and the next day Rodrigo and the neighboring villages were occupied in tranquillity. The cavalry was then sent out to the forest, and being aided by Julian Sanchez' partidas, brought in from a thousand to fifteen hundred stragglers who must otherwise have perished. During these events Joseph occupied Salamanca, but Colonel Miranda, the Spanish officer left at Alba de Tormes, held that place until the 27th, and then carried off his garrison in the night.

Thus ended the retreat from Burgos. The French gathered a good spoil of baggage, but the loss of the allies in men cannot be exactly determined, because no Spanish returns were ever seen. An approximation may however be easily made. According to the muster-rolls, about a thousand Anglo-Portuguese were killed, wounded and missing between the 21st and 29th of October, the period of their crossing the Duero, but this only refers to loss in action; Hill's loss between the Tagus and the Tormes was, including stragglers, four hundred, and the defence of Alba de Tormes cost one hundred. If the Spanish regulars and partidas marching with the two armies be reckoned to have lost a thousand, which considering their want of discipline is not exaggerated, the whole loss previous to the French passage of the Tormes will amount perhaps to three thousand men. But the loss between the Tormes and the Agueda was certainly greater, for nearly three hundred were killed and wounded at the Huebra; many stragglers died in the woods, and Jourdan said the prisoners, Spanish, Portuguese and English, brought into Salamanca up to the 20th November, were three thousand five hundred and twenty.\* The whole loss of the double retreat cannot therefore be set down at less than nine thousand, including the loss in the siege.

Some French writers have spoken of ten thousand being taken between the Tormes and the Agueda, and Souham estimated the previous loss, including the siege of Burgos, at seven thousand. But the King in his despatches called the whole loss twelve thousand, including therein the garrison of Chinchilla; and he observed that if the cavalry generals, Soult and Tilley, had followed the allies vigorously from Salamanca the loss would have been much greater. Certainly the army was so little pressed that none would have supposed the French horsemen were numerous. On the other hand English authors have most unaccountably reduced the British loss to as many hundreds.

Although the French halted on the Huebra, the English troops were kept together behind the Agueda, because Soult retired with

\* Appendix 9.