

lished at Frenada, every disposition was made to pay attention to the sick, of which the numbers became every day more and more alarming. When we first established ourselves in Fuente Guinaldo, there were, besides Portuguese, thirteen thousand British soldiers in hospital,—when we retired behind the Coa, that number had considerably increased; and we had not inhabited our new quarters a week, before it swelled to the enormous amount of sixteen thousand men. The unhealthy season came on, too; fevers and agues made rapid progress amongst us, till scarcely a regiment could muster upon parade two-thirds of its numerical strength; and the medical attendants almost sank beneath the fatigues which they were condemned to endure. To add to our present discomfort, the billets were, for the most part, extremely small and incommodious. The rain, which fell in torrents, soon penetrated the thin roofs of the cottages among which the troops were distributed; and even the larger mansions, or chateaux, of which the general and staff officers were put in possession, ceased, at last, to resist a deluge so incessant. Then, our out-of-doors occupation was destroyed. We could neither hunt nor shoot, nor follow the different employments which, in dry weather, contributed equally to our health and amusement; whilst a total absence of books, with fare somewhat scanty and coarse, enabled us to struggle

with difficulty against ennui. On the whole, I have no hesitation in pointing to the period of our sojourn among the villages on the left bank of the Coa, as one of the least interesting throughout the Peninsular war, during which there occurred absolutely nothing to individuals, calculated either to excite or amuse; and in which public events were, with a few memorable exceptions, such as to depress, rather than elevate, the spirits of those who gave to them any grave or serious attention.

Having premised thus much, I shall cease to drag the reader through a detail of the petty actions which distinguished one day from another in this tedious time of rest, but merely state the least unimportant; and as these happened to be neither numerous nor very unusual in their nature, a few words will suffice for the purpose. It is first, however, worthy of remark, that though driven by circumstances into this state of temporary inaction, Lord Wellington ceased not for a moment to devise plans for the future, or to prepare the means of carrying them into execution. Before the weather broke, serious thoughts were entertained of making an attempt upon Ciudad Rodrigo by escalade; but the rising of the waters caused it to be abandoned, perhaps not unhappily for the credit of our arms. Next, a scheme was devised for the commencement and prosecution of a siege, as soon as the aspect of affairs in La

Mancha and Galicia might authorise the measure; and working parties were in consequence employed at Almeida, with the view of converting it into a place d'armes against the projected undertaking. Without absolutely investing it, flying parties passed continually round Rodrigo, so as to interrupt the communications between the garrison, and the army in its rear; and these performed, on several occasions, services of considerable importance: the following may be taken as a specimen.

Don Julian de Sanchez was one of the most enterprising and able of all the guerilla chiefs whom the progress of the war had called into active life. He commanded a small body of irregular horse, with which he repeatedly executed exploits such as few men besides himself would have attempted; till his name became as famous in the rude songs of his countrymen, as it was dreaded and abhorred by his country's invaders. Don Julian had thrown himself into Ciudad Rodrigo, when Massena laid siege to it; and contributed not a little both by his example and personal exertions to the gallant defence which it offered; and when at last a surrender became indispensable, he cut his way, at the head of his troops, through the enemy's lines, and escaped. Since that period, he had harassed and destroyed numerous convoys in Asturias, Galicia, and others of the northern provinces; and now, having attached himself at length to our

army, he rendered himself exceedingly useful, by taking an active part in those patrolling expeditions of which I have just spoken.

It was the custom of the French garrison to send out their cattle every morning beyond the walls for the purpose of grazing, under the protection of a guard, which at once tended them, and watched the movements of our parties. Don Julian determined, if possible, to surprise the herd; for which purpose he concealed his people, day after day, among the broken ground on the bank of the river, not far from the town; but the guard proved, for a time, so vigilant, that no opportunity occurred of effecting his design. At last, however, an accident occurred, which enabled him to accomplish, not only his original purpose, but one which he did not dream of accomplishing. It so happened, that on a certain day—on the 15th of October—General Regnaud, the governor of the place, rode out, attended by his staff and a slender escort, and ventured, somewhat incautiously, to pass the Agueda at the very spot where Don Julian's ambuscade lay concealed. He was instantly surrounded by the Spanish cavalry, and made prisoner; and as if fortune had determined to reward the latter for their patience, the cattle appeared at the same moment at a sufficient distance from the walls to authorise an attack. The attack was made with the most perfect success,

and both Governor and cattle were conveyed in triumph to our head-quarters. In a native of any country except France, such an unlucky coincidence would have produced a degree of gloom not to be shaken off; but by General Regnaud, his misfortunes were borne with the utmost philosophy and good-humour. He became a frequent guest at Lord Wellington's table, and we found him an extremely entertaining as well as intelligent companion. He talked very freely of the designs of his own superiors, and laid open to us much of the internal economy of the French armies, among the leaders of which it appeared, from his statements, that no great cordiality prevailed; and his reasonings on the general aspect of the war, though not always sound, were invariably specious, and always interesting.

CHAPTER IX.

Increasing jealousies among the Spaniards, and numerous disasters in the south, produce gloom in the British army— It continues in its quarters, and makes preparations to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo—The French armies suddenly withdraw towards the south and east of Spain—Lord Wellington moves to the front, and invests Rodrigo—Progress of the siege—Storming and capture of the place.

WHILST we were thus conducting ourselves on the banks of the Coa, affairs gradually assumed, in other quarters of the Peninsula, an appearance less and less cheering. At Cadiz, discord the most ill-timed prevailed, both among the inhabitants and the government; whilst the troops in general, instead of improving in discipline and military skill, became more and more inefficient every day. All classes, too, manifested towards their allies a degree of jealousy, for which no adequate cause could be assigned; they suspected

every proposal, however disinterested in its nature, and threw impediments in the way of every design, provided only the one chanced to originate with an English officer, and the other were to be carried into execution by English soldiers. Nor were matters in a condition many degrees superior to this elsewhere. Madrid submitted quietly to the domination of the usurper, and the whole country from thence to the Bidassoa was overrun. In Galicia, General Abadia was at the head of only 7,000 recruits, miserably clothed and fed, though sufficiently armed; whilst Castanos's army of Estremadura might muster perhaps 750 officers, and 2 or 300 men!! It is true that in Catalonia the Spaniards were reported to have obtained some successes under Lacy; and that the Empeinado and Mina were both actively employed as guerillas; but Suchet had already achieved so successful a campaign, that, with the exception of a few strong places, the southern provinces might be considered as subdued. All this was discouraging enough; yet was it less discouraging than the palpable proofs which every day presented themselves of the exhausted patriotism of the Spanish people. Men of all ranks spoke openly of the folly of continuing a struggle so hopeless; and most of the higher orders began seriously to provide for their own safety, by giving in their submission to the new dynasty. In a

word, the nation at large seemed weary of the war, and desirous of being relieved from its miseries at any cost and upon any terms; whilst the government appeared more anxious to recover the revolted colonies of South America, than to deliver the mother country from the presence of its invaders. At the very moment when every exertion ought to have been made to increase the numbers of the army, and improve its discipline, the regency was sending its best regiments across the Atlantic for the purpose of keeping Mexico in obedience, and re-conquering the Caraccas, till the troops themselves refused at last to proceed, and mutiny threatened to fill up the measure of the calamities under which Spain laboured.

With such prospects in the political horizon, and an absence of comfort amongst ourselves, a spirit of dissatisfaction began to arise in the bosoms of many, as well as a powerful feeling that the cause had at length become desperate. The Portuguese, no doubt, were still true to themselves; that is to say, the dissensions in the local government were rendered comparatively harmless by a decree from Rio Janeiro, which placed the resources of the country at the disposal of Lord Wellington and Marshal Beresford, and left them at liberty to act, in military matters, according to the dictates of their own judgment. But there were few individuals attached to the army so

short-sighted as not to be aware that, should Spain finally submit to the power of France, any effort to maintain Portugal must be futile. Multitudes accordingly now began to turn their eyes elsewhere, and to desire employment either in England or the colonies; and the numbers of those who actually requested and obtained leave to quit the country, were by no means inconsiderable. Our chief alone appeared to retain his usual sanguine expectations; for he continued his preparations for a fresh campaign with the same diligence and with the same composure, as if the state of the Peninsula had been as favourable, as from the proclamations of the Cortes, and the statements in the English newspapers, it was represented to be.

We were thus situated, when the report of a brilliant enterprise, admirably conducted by General Hill, in Spanish Estremadura, came in to enliven us. When Marmont withdrew to his cantonments around Plasencia, he left a corps of his army, under General Gerard, at Merida, which subsequently returned to the vicinity of Zafra, where it took post. Gerard remained quietly here for some time; but being ordered to levy contributions on the inhabitants of Caceres, he moved, about the middle of October, towards that place; thus endangering the depot of Castanos's corps, which had there its head-quarters. To counteract

this movement, and defeat its object, General Hill was directed to take the field. He advanced from Portalegre on the 22nd, and causing the enemy to evacuate Aleseda, of which they had recently possessed themselves, he pursued them as far as Alcuerca, where he contrived, in a masterly and scientific manner, to surprise and disperse them. The following is a brief account of this splendid affair:—

General Hill passed the night of the 21st at Malpartida, where he obtained such information of the enemy's incaution, as induced him to entertain a hope that they might, by dint of extraordinary exertion on his part, be overtaken, and brought to action. With this view, he put his columns in march at an early hour on the morning of the 27th, and following certain by-paths, arrived that evening, unobserved by Gerard, at Alcuerca. He was now within one short league of Arroyo del Molino, the village where Gerard's corps was to pass the night; so he prohibited all fires from being lighted, and took other necessary precautions to conceal his approach. He was perfectly successful; for the enemy remained in utter ignorance of his proximity, till they found themselves attacked on the morning of the 28th, just as they were preparing to commence their march. Thus taken by surprise, they offered, as might be expected, no very resolute resistance;

and the victory was such, that out of 2,500 infantry, and 600 cavalry, of which the French corps originally consisted, scarcely 500 made their escape; General Gerard himself being wounded, and his artillery taken. General Hill received, as he deserved, the highest encomiums for the ability with which his enterprise was conducted; and the enterprise itself continued, for some time, to furnish the chief topic of conversation at headquarters.

In the mean while, however, Lord Wellington, with that unwearied diligence which so peculiarly distinguishes him, was applying all the powers of his mind to the removal of certain inconveniences, under which, both now and at former periods, his army had painfully laboured. The two great evils of which we found principal cause to complain, were, the impoverished state of our military chest, and a very inadequate as well as uncertain supply of the means of military transport. To obviate the former, our chief devised a scheme for the passing current through Spain and Portugal of exchequer bills; and to try how far the theory could be reduced to practice, he requested that a supply should be remitted from England to the amount of 150,000*l*. For the diminishing the latter, he caused a number of cars to be fabricated after a particular model, so that boys might be capable of managing them; and arranging them into brigades,

composed each of thirty-five carriages, he placed them, after the fashion of the commissariat mules, under their several capitaos or leaders. How far the first of these devices was found to answer its end, I take it not upon me to determine ; but the last proved productive of the greatest advantages, and at once rendered us independent of the caprice and jealousy which too frequently stood in the way of our most important undertakings. Unhappily, however, our efforts to straiten the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo were not attended with the same beneficial results. In spite of our utmost diligence, the enemy contrived to throw convoy after convoy into the place, till in the end the investing force became infinitely more straitened for provisions, forage, and other necessaries, than the force which it sought to inconvenience. The truth is, that our troops were, at the present juncture, at too great a distance from the fort, to watch it to any good purpose ; whilst they were too far in front to find subsistence for themselves in a country which had so long and so frequently been the seat of active operations. It was in vain that one or more divisions moved up, from time to time, towards the Agueda, as often as a report came in, that some fresh supplies were collecting, and some fresh convoys about to move upon Rodrigo. They arrived either to learn that the stores had already passed, or that the whole had

been a false alarm ; till both men and officers began to grow heartily tired of a species of warfare which harassed and fatigued themselves, without bringing the slightest inconvenience upon the enemy. At last the General determined upon withdrawing a portion of his army further to the rear ; where the horses, which had wasted away to mere skeletons on account of the scarcity of provender, might be enabled to recover their strength, and to scatter the rest over a wider surface, wherever more convenient accommodations could be found for it.

In accordance with this arrangement, the fifth and sixth divisions, with the whole of the cavalry except a single brigade, retired towards the Douro and the Mondego, where they occupied a range of villages infinitely more commodious than any which had of late been assigned to them. Headquarters, however, continued, as before, at Frenada ; whilst the first division, under General Graham, took post at Pinhel on the left, the third and fourth in the centre, between the Agueda and the Coa, the seventh on the left, extending as far as Penamacor, and the light, under Crawford, considerably in advance, at Guinaldo, on the right bank of the Agueda. The good effects of these changes were almost immediately felt. Our sick daily diminished, our horses gradually returned to condition, and the spirits of all rose, as they felt

themselves becoming more and more efficient; whilst a blessed change in the weather, by enabling us to resume our ancient out-of-door occupations, tended, in no slight degree, to restore our primitive good-humour.

In this channel affairs continued to flow, till the year 1811 came to a close. Our parties labouring assiduously at Almeida, brought it, by degrees, to assume something like the appearance of a fortified place; whilst preparations were busily made for throwing across the Agueda a bridge upon tressels, sufficiently durable to resist the influence of the stream. Stores and ammunition, with a considerable train of heavy artillery, were likewise moved towards the front; and the divisions of infantry stationed there, busied themselves in the construction of gabions and fascines. Everything, in short, appeared to indicate that sooner or latter Ciudad Rodrigo would be regularly besieged; and the first opportunity which offered for the purpose, was not permitted to pass unnoticed.

During the last three months, the enemy's troops in the north and centre of Spain had remained tolerably quiet, there being no force, with the exception of General Abadia's corps, to occupy their attention; whilst in the south, hostilities were carried on with increasing vigour. Master of Tarragona, and victorious over everything in the

field, Suchet sat down before Valencia, whilst Victor drove back Ballasteros under the walls of Gibraltar, and directed a considerable division of his corps against Tariffa. In the mean while, General Drouet, at the head of twelve thousand men, insured the submission of Spanish Estremadura; and Soult, whose head-quarters were understood to be at Seville, kept that kingdom also in subjection. Thus were the Spaniards pressed on every side by corps against which they could make no head; and it appeared as if the subjugation of all those important places, which up to the present moment had offered the most steady resistance, were at hand.

I have in former parts of this narrative taken occasion to observe, that whatever might have been their conduct in the field, the Spanish troops seldom failed to do their duty when employed in the defence of fortified places. The fortress of Murviedro, which Suchet found it necessary to subdue, as a preparatory step to the reduction of Valencia, cost him dear; and the same spirit which had animated the garrison of the one place, appeared to prevail among that which held the other. Tariffa, too, being happily occupied by a thousand English soldiers under Colonel Skerret, withstood and repelled all the efforts of the enemy to carry it; whilst bands of guerillas gathered round the rear of the French armies, and seriously

retarded their progress. It became necessary, under these circumstances, to reinforce their strength from other provinces. The whole of the disposable regiments in the vicinity of Madrid were, in consequence, moved to Toledo; and towards the end of the year, Marmont himself broke up from his cantonments at Plasencia and Talavera, and fell into the same line. It so happened that D'Orsenne, with the army of the centre, took the road, about the same time, to Burgos; and we were left without any thing in our front, as well upon the side of Beira as in the direction of the Alentejo.

Lord Wellington was no sooner made acquainted with these several movements, than he hastened to avail himself of the opportunity which they presented, of effecting that end towards which his most anxious attention had been so long and so steadily turned. Directing General Hill to advance upon Merida, as well with the view of alarming Drouet as to effect a diversion in favour of the beleaguered places, and to draw off part of the enemy's force from Ballasteros, he himself made ready to invest Ciudad Rodrigo in form, and to wrest it, if possible, out of the hands of a garrison, now unavoidably left to its own resources. There were not wanting amongst us some who criticised this design, and would have greatly preferred a general inroad into Spain, bare as it was of

French armies up to the very walls of the capital; but Lord Wellington was too well aware of the difficulties to which his troops must be exposed, were they, in the month of January, 1812, to penetrate into an exhausted country, to give to that suggestion one moment's consideration. Besides, his own honour, and the honour of his army, were in some degree staked upon the recovery of the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo; whilst the safety of the province of Beira might be said mainly to depend upon it. Orders were accordingly issued for the immediate advance of as many stores as it was possible to collect; whilst the divisions in front closed one upon another, and made ready to move upon the Agueda.

Seldom has an army embarked on a business so arduous, under circumstances more unfavourable than those which attended us at present. In the first place, the situation of the place to be attacked, standing, as I have already said, upon the brink of a rapid river, and surrounded by a vast plain destitute of positions, water, or even cover for the troops, rendered it impossible to establish ourselves permanently about it, without exposing the men to hardships which must soon prove fatal to their health. It would therefore be necessary, after driving the garrison within their lines, to carry on the siege by relays of divisions; in other words, to keep the main body in cantonments on

the left bank of the Agueda, whilst a certain number of brigades should push on the works on the right bank, the rest relieving them in that duty at the expiration of a certain space of time. Now, though the Agueda be fordable in several places during dry weather, it requires but a few hours of heavy rain to render the fords impassable; whilst the rain, which might chance to last for a few days, would inevitably sweep away the only bridge which we had found it practicable to lay down. At the present season of the year, however, such rains were not only of probable occurrence, but confidently to be apprehended; and therefore we set out with a prospect before us, of continual interruptions, from causes which no exertions on our part would suffice to obviate. In the next place, the means at our disposal, whether of transport or attack, fell infinitely short of the very lowest calculation which the superintending engineer had been able to form. Instead of 1400 cars, the amount demanded, we could muster no more than 450; and our whole materiel consisted of 38 twenty-four pounders, with 12 howitzers. We possessed not a single mortar, and our stock, both of powder and shells, was exceedingly scanty. There was, moreover, every reason to apprehend that, as soon as the enemy should be made aware of our design, they would hasten to defeat it, and a question naturally arose, whether, under all cir-

cumstances, it would be possible for us to bring the undertaking to a fortunate termination. Now a repulse, in any case, would have been abundantly distressing; had this been our first attempt of the kind, not to succeed in it would be infinitely more injurious than not to embark in it at all; but were we again thwarted, after all that had occurred already, it was hard to calculate upon the mischief which might be expected to ensue. Yet was it absolutely necessary that something should be done, as well for the gratification of the people of England, as to satisfy our allies that we were not indifferent to their calamities; and as the only choice submitted to him lay between the siege of Rodrigo, and an advance into the interior of Spain, Lord Wellington wisely determined on the former. On the 5th of January, the divisions in the rear began to close up; on the 6th and 7th, the army assembled, and on the 8th we crossed the Agueda in force, and completed the investment.

Of the general features of the country by which Ciudad Rodrigo is surrounded, a sufficiently elaborate account has been given already. I will not, therefore, repeat it here; but as little or no notice has yet been taken of the defences by which it was covered, it may not be amiss if I endeavour to make the reader acquainted with their nature, before I proceed to detail to him any circumstances attending the siege. The following de-

scription is extracted from Colonel Jones's Journal of Sieges; a work which every soldier would do well to study, and which every civilian may peruse with satisfaction:—

“ Ciudad Rodrigo is built on a rising ground, on the right bank of the Agueda; it has a double enceinte all round it; the interior wall is of an old construction, of the height of thirty-two feet, and is generally of bad masonry, without flanks, and with weak parapets and narrow ramparts; the exterior enclosure is a modern *fausse-braie*, of a low profile, and is constructed so far down the slope of the hill, as to afford but little cover to the interior wall; and from the same cause of the rapid descent of the hill, the *fausse-braie* itself is very imperfectly covered by its glacis. On the east and south sides, there are ravelines to the *fausse-braie*; but in no part is there a covered way, nor are there any counter-mines: without the town, at the distance of three hundred yards, are the suburbs; they are enclosed by a bad earthen retrenchment, hastily thrown up by the Spaniards during the investment of the place in 1810; and the French, since they had been in possession of Rodrigo, had made strong posts of three convents— one on either flank of the suburbs, and one in the centre; and they had also converted into an infantry post the convent of Santa Cruz, situated just beyond the glacis on the north-west angle of

the place. The works of the suburbs, therefore, though contemptible in themselves, yet as supported by these convents, were considered as fully competent to resist a coup-de-main.

“The ground without the place is generally flat, and the soil rocky, except on the north side, where there are two hills, called the lesser and the greater Teson; the one, at 180 yards from the works, rises nearly to the level of the ramparts, and the other, at 600 yards’ distance, to the height of 13 feet above them. The soil on these hills is very stony, and during winter, water (usually) rises at the depth of six inches below the surface: the French had erected a small redoubt on the highest hill, which, from its situation, prevented any attack on that side till it should be taken: this redoubt was supported by two guns, and a howitzer in battery, on the top of the fortified convent of St. Francisco, at 400 yards from it, and a large proportion of the artillery of the place, (particularly mortars and howitzers placed behind the rampart of the *fausse-braie*,) was in battery to fire upon the approach from the hill.”

There were two points at which this place might be readily assailed; one on the eastern and southern sides, where the ground was more flat, but the suburbs extensive; the other on the north, where the hill and redoubt just alluded to protected it from insult. Lord Wellington seemed

at first disposed to make his approaches from the former of these quarters ; but, on mature deliberation, it was found that the superior fire from the northern face would not present obstacles so serious as those which the rocky nature of the soil, and the resistance to be expected from the fortified convents and suburbs, would offer on the other. It was known too, from the system of attack adopted by Massena, that the walls on the northern front might be breached at a distance ; whereas, on the southern and eastern fronts, it appeared doubtful, from the natural fall of the ground, whether any impression could be made, except from batteries erected on the crest of the glacis ; and as the saving of time was to us a matter of the first consideration, that which promised most speedily to lay open the body of the place, was pronounced to be the best. For these, among other reasons, our chief readily laid aside his first intentions, and having closely reconnoitred the city in all its faces, he determined to act upon the second with as much promptitude as vigour.

With this view he resolved that ground should be broken on the night of the day in which the investment was effected ; and as it was essential, as a preparatory measure, to obtain possession of the redoubt which crowned the greater Teson, orders were issued that it should be attacked by a party of the light division, and carried by escalade.



Our troops, to whom no ladders had been issued out, and who probably did not dream of requiring such implements thus early, immediately sat down to construct them, and the sides of a few Spanish cars which had conveyed intrenching tools from Almeida, supplied them with materials. They tore them to pieces, and long before the appointed hour a sufficient quantity for the service in contemplation was completed. Three hundred men of the 52nd and 95th regiments then prepared, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Colbourne, to assault the outwork. They were to be supported by two firing parties, which received instructions to keep up a warm discharge of musketry upon the opposite flanks, for the purpose of distracting the attention of the garrison; whilst the storming party, descending into the ditch, should cut away the palisades, and mount, with the assistance of their rude ladders, into the redoubt. Everything was done with the most admirable order and daring courage. At nine o'clock at night, the several detachments moved to the posts assigned them, and our brave fellows, finding that the palisades were close to the outward side of the ditch, sprang over them, without pausing to break them down. They then rushed pell-mell into the redoubt, and taking the enemy completely by surprise, made themselves masters, not only of it, but of the entire garrison which had

been appointed to defend it. Two officers, forty men, and three pieces of cannon captured, were the fruits of their success; and it was purchased by the loss of only six men killed, three officers and sixteen men wounded.

The way being thus cleared to ulterior operations, 700 men immediately advanced towards the hill, 300 of whom were to effect a lodgment close to the redoubt, whilst 400 should open the communication to it from the rear. They succeeded in both objects with wonderfully little loss; for the enemy, irritated by the fall of the outwork, directed all their fire upon it, and our people were in consequence enabled to pursue their tasks unmolested. When morning dawned, therefore, the cover was found to be such, that reliefs might, with perfect safety, be employed to complete by day what had been so well begun at night; and hence, within little more than twenty-four hours from the investment of the place, our engineers found themselves in a situation to mark out the first parallel. That, again, was begun, and so far brought to perfection, between sunset on the 9th and sunrise on the 10th, as to afford excellent shelter to the workmen; indeed, so unremitting were the zeal of the superintendents and the activity of the troops, that before noon on the 13th, not only was the first parallel completed, but three batteries, capable of containing thirty-

two pieces of artillery, were erected. The guns were likewise brought up, the platforms laid, and an ample supply of ammunition lodged in the magazines; and we began already to talk of the opening of the batteries as an occurrence which might be hourly expected.

We were thus situated when intelligence arrived at head-quarters, which, without alarming either Lord Wellington or his followers, increased the anxiety of all to bring the undertaking before them as speedily as possible to an end. We learned that Marmont, after proceeding in the direction of Valencia as far as Oçana, had suddenly given out that his presence in the east was not required, and returning with four of his divisions, had taken the route of the Guadarama pass towards Valladolid and Salamanca. His object was represented to be, a desire to throw supplies into Ciudad Rodrigo, of our operations against which, however, both he and D'Orsenne were said still to be in ignorance; indeed we ascertained, upon what appeared to be good authority, that even at Salamanca, a distance of only sixteen leagues from our trenches, not a rumour of the siege had, so lately as the 12th, got abroad. A good deal of time had thus been gained by us, upon which, at the commencement of the business, it would have been idle to calculate; but it would have been worse than idle to suppose that a

secrecy, under any circumstances so remarkable, would long continue to screen our operations. On the contrary, it was but just to believe that the French generals might, even whilst we were discussing their plans, be made acquainted with the perilous predicament in which Rodrigo stood ; and it was beyond a question, that whenever they did ascertain that fact, they would make the utmost exertions to relieve it. The matters, therefore, upon which alone we considered it necessary to speculate, were, the probable period at which they would be enabled to arrive, and the amount of force with which, within a given space of time, they could be in a condition to threaten our besieging army.

With respect to the former of these considerations, it was the opinion of Lord Wellington, that were they to exert themselves as they might, sufficient time would not be granted for a regular and scientific prosecution of the siege to a close. He therefore directed that the batteries in the first parallel should be armed, and that they should open at once upon the body of the place, without pausing to silence the enemy's fire, or ruin his defences. By this means he hoped to effect a breach in the course of a few days at the furthest ; when he would either storm with the counterscarp entire, or approach by the more secure but tedious process of sap, according as Marmont should, or should

not, show a disposition to molest him. With respect to the latter question at issue, it was not so easy a matter to come to any certain conclusion. Some time ago a rumour had prevailed that D'Orsenne, with the division of guards, was recalled to France; but that was now ascertained to be destitute of foundation. On the contrary, that general was stated to be himself at Valladolid, with a portion of his corps; whilst the remainder were at Burgos, and in the country to the north of it. Now, were Marmont and D'Orsenne again to unite, their force would doubtless outnumber us in the same proportion in which it outnumbered us before; indeed the odds against us would be greater, inasmuch as we could not now, with any honour, abandon our works, and must therefore separate our army into covering and besieging corps. For the enemy to effect this junction, however, a larger space of time would be required than would be necessary on our part to accomplish the reduction of the place, even by the most tedious process contemplated; and hence we felt no great apprehension that our labours would be interrupted by the united armies of Portugal and the centre. Still a very considerable force, perhaps forty thousand men, could, it was believed, be brought against us so early as the 27th or 28th; and even forty thousand men would occasion no trifling inconvenience to troops entangled, as we

were, round a strong place, and destitute of any favourable position from which to act against them.

With this prospect before him, Lord Wellington at once urged forward the siege by every means in his power, and took such steps as promised most effectually to secure those employed in it from interruption. Some of the divisions which had hitherto occupied cantonments considerably in the rear, were moved up, and placed themselves in quarters, the fifth at Albergaria, at Janca, and on the Coa; and the seventh at Payo. The cavalry, consisting of the brigades of Generals Slade and Anson, of the 1st hussars, of Alten's, of the 3rd dragoons and 4th dragoon guards under Le Marchand, with four troops of horse artillery, were at Ituero; and General Bradford's brigade of Portuguese infantry at Barba del Puerco. General Hill, likewise, received instructions to throw a couple of brigades across the Tagus at Villa Velha, for the purpose of giving additional support to our right; whilst he himself, in case of need, should fall back upon Portalegre and Niza. Thus it was calculated that an army of 38,000 infantry and 2500 cavalry could, within a few hours, be assembled at any given point; and with 38,000 infantry and 2500 cavalry, it was felt that there existed but small ground of apprehension, let Marmont take the field when he might.

In the mean while, our works before the town