

were proceeding with the same diligence and vigour which had hitherto characterised them. There was a fortified convent on the right of the captured redoubt, which commanded the very spot upon which it was proposed to form a second parallel. This it was considered necessary to reduce; and the service was performed on the night of the 13th, in the handsomest manner, by the light companies of guards, supported by Lord Blantyre's brigade. Our men approached the post wholly unobserved, and making their way within the barricade, found the garrison of fifty men collected round a large fire, and sound asleep. The enemy, roused thus awkwardly from their slumbers, fled in all directions, without making the faintest effort to defend themselves; and as they left arms, knapsacks, and every thing behind, they easily leaped from the windows, and effected their escape; but the convent remained in our possession, and it proved of the utmost utility in covering the progress of the sap, which was immediately begun, and carried on to the line of the projected parallel.

The enemy had hitherto confined their resistance to a heavy cannonade from the walls; on the 14th, they tried the fortune of a sortie, and for a moment or two their success was such as to threaten the most serious consequences. An exceedingly culpable custom prevailed among the

troops stationed for the defence of the trenches, by which the old guard, as soon as the relief came in sight, began to move off; thus leaving the advanced line wholly undefended from any effort which the garrison might make to take possession of it. From the tops of the towers, on which officers were constantly stationed, this extreme negligence on our part was repeatedly observed; and the Governor having ascertained that it was a matter of daily occurrence, resolved to take advantage of it. At eleven o'clock, therefore, in the forenoon of the 14th, about five companies sallied from the town, just as one of our guards had quitted the trenches, and the other was as yet at some distance from them; and they pushed on with so much haste, that they arrived at the very wall of the convent before they were stopped. The workmen, unarmed and surprised, could only retire before them; but an alarm being immediately given, Lord Blantyre's brigade, with a detachment of Germans, hastened to the spot, and with difficulty threw themselves between the French troops and the point of attack. The latter were then driven back, and they fled within the town, having effected no other object besides upsetting most of the gabions which had been placed on the preceding night; neither they nor we suffering any serious loss in killed or wounded.

There had been mounted, during the earlier

part of this morning, twenty-five heavy twenty-four pounders in the batteries already constructed in the first parallel. With these a fire was directed to be opened, partly upon the point intended to be breached, and partly upon the convent of St. Francisco, another fortified post which, from the left of the redoubt, enfiladed our projected communication between the first and second parallels. At four o'clock in the afternoon it began; and of a spectacle more strikingly magnificent, it has rarely been the good fortune even of a British soldier to be a witness. The evening chanced to be remarkably beautiful and still; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a breath of wind astir, when suddenly the roar of artillery broke in upon its calmness, and volumes of smoke rose slowly from our batteries. These floating gently towards the town, soon enveloped the lower parts of the hill, and even the ramparts and bastions, in a dense veil; whilst the towers and summits lifting their heads over the haze, showed like fairy buildings, or those unsubstantial castles which are sometimes seen in the clouds on a summer's day. The flashes from our guns, answered as they promptly were from the artillery in the place, the roar of their thunder reverberating among the remote mountains of the Sierra de Francisca; these, with the rattle of the balls against the masonry, and the occasional crash as portions of

the wall gave way, proved, altogether, a scene which, to be rightly understood, must be experienced. I confess that I have seldom been more powerfully and yet singularly affected, than I was by this magnificent combination of sights and sounds; and the chances are, that I shall never again enjoy another opportunity of experiencing similar sensations.

The point against which our present efforts were directed, was that which the French, during the siege of 1810, had breached, and which, according to the opinion of our ablest engineers, had not yet obtained that solidity which time, and time only, bestows on masonry. It was, however, so well covered by the *fausse-braie*, that serious doubts were entertained, whether it would be practicable to reach it with effect till after that should have been blown in; whilst the distance at which our batteries were erected, full 650 yards from the crest of the *glacis*, rendered the practice less accurate, as well as less destructive, than it would have otherwise been. Both of these circumstances told against us; but our guns, of English manufacture, were excellent of their kind, and our gunners skilful; and hence it was easy to perceive that the top, at least, of the rampart, crumbled rapidly before them, and that it required only a better position to enable our object to be attained to its fullest extent. Preparations were

accordingly made to advance our works further ; and a sap, destined to crown the summit of the lesser Teson, was begun.

The guns, which were directed exclusively upon the convent of St. Francisco, made of that post, after some hours of heavy firing, a heap of ruins ; and it, as well as the suburbs, were taken possession of by the 40th regiment soon after dusk on the 14th. Parties were then sedulously employed, as well in extending the second parallel, as in throwing up fresh batteries ; and on the 17th, our trenches were advanced to the summit of the nearest hill, within 180 yards of the body of the place. From the new batteries, likewise, so commanding a fire was brought to bear, both upon the main breach and upon an old tower, somewhat to the right of it, that the latter at length fell with a tremendous crash, and the former was pronounced practicable. Pits were next dug, here and there, along the glacis, into which riflemen were introduced, with orders to fire unintermittingly upon the embrasures ; whilst a continued shower of grape and canister, thrown in both by night and day, kept the faces of the breaches clear, and hindered any attempts at repairing them.

Such was the condition of Ciudad Rodrigo—the *fausse-braie* shaken to atoms, and two formidable breaches in its main wall ; when Lord Wellington, willing to spare the lives both of his

own troops and of the garrison, sent in to demand a surrender. The reply, though not such as could have been desired, was nevertheless one which all brave men must admire; and I give it in the words of the Governor, because these alone can do it full justice: "Sa Majesté l'Empereur," said he, "m'a confié le commandement de Ciudad Rodrigo. Je ne puis pas le rendre. Au contraire, moi et la brave garnison que je commande s'enseveliront dans ses ruines."

Nothing therefore remained but to carry the place by assault; and to this end all our future exertions were turned. On the 18th the town was closely reconnoitred by Major Sturgeon, of the staff corps, whose exertions and ability from the commencement of the siege had been very conspicuous. He reported that on the enemy's left of the main breach there was a favourable point of entrance for a body of troops, which might assist in flanking the approach of the column of attack in that quarter, whilst the lesser breach on the right was perfectly accessible; and Lord Wellington, satisfied by the declaration, determined to defer the final struggle no longer. The night of the 19th was accordingly fixed upon as the proper period for commencing the assault; and in the mean while, all the details of the plan upon which it was deemed advisable to conduct it, were drawn up, and maturely considered.

All who know Lord Wellington are aware that, to the kind of influence by which other men are liable to be effected, he is and ever has been an entire stranger. In all his undertakings, be they great or small, the single circumstance which had weight with him was, that everything should be done correctly ; and that the least possible inconvenience should be experienced, not only by the persons immediately employed, but by the army in general. Acting upon this principle, he issued orders that the attack should be made by the divisions, whatever they might chance to be, which should happen to be on duty that day in the trenches ; and as the light and third divisions enjoyed that good fortune, upon them the honourable task devolved of carrying Ciudad Rodrigo by assault. The third division, consisting of the brigades of Major-general M'Kinnon and Lieutenant-colonel Campbell—that is to say, of the 45th, 74th, 88th, and five companies of the 60th regiments on the one hand, and of the 5th, 77th, 83rd, and 94th on the other—were to attack the main breach. They were to be preceded by the light companies, under Major Manners, as a storming party ; as these, again, were to be headed by parties carrying wool-packs and ladders ; the former for the purpose of filling up the ditch, the latter to enable the assailants to mount the wall. They were to form, General M'Kin-

non's leading and Colonel Campbell's supporting, in the second parallel; and they had as their reserve a Portuguese brigade, drawn up in order in the trenches. To aid this principal attack, a demonstration was to be made on our right by Major O'Toole of the 95th rifle corps, at the head of five companies of that regiment, and of the light companies of the 83rd and 94th; and the particular care of guiding this little column was assigned to Major Sturgeon, at whose suggestion it prepared to act. In the mean while the smaller breach on our left was to be stormed by the light division, consisting of Major-general Vandeleur and Colonel Barnard's brigades—in other words, of two battalions of the 52nd, one of the 43rd, two of the 95th, and two of Caçadores. The attack was to be led by General Vandeleur's brigade, which issuing from the left of the convent St. Francisco, was to descend into the ditch, and advance, first upon the breach in the *fausse-braie*, and then upon that in the body of the place. As soon as they should succeed in gaining the summit of the *fausse-braie*, they were to detach to their right, for the purpose of communicating with General M'Kinnon's brigade, and flanking the assault of the principal wall; and whenever they had crowned the breach in that wall against which they were directed, they were in like manner to

turn to the right, and join the main attack. This done, and a communication between the two columns being established, an effort was to be made to burst open the Salamanca gate, opposite to the convent of St. Francisco; upon which the rest of the division, which up to that moment were to remain in reserve, would enter and secure the conquest of the place. Here, as at the greater breach, a select party of men were appointed to head their comrades; they consisted of 300 volunteers under the command of Major Napier; and they, like the storming party elsewhere, were preceded by the bearers of bags, ladders, and the other engines of assault. Finally, the parties appointed to carry these necessary implements were prohibited from taking with them their arms; and the storming parties received positive instructions on no account whatever to fire a shot.

Partly with a view to draw a portion of the enemy's attention from the breaches, and partly under the idea that, during the confusion, an entrance might be obtained by escalade, General Pack's Portuguese brigade received instructions, as soon as the firing should become general, to demonstrate against the outwork of St. Jago, and the convent of La Caridad. They were to plant their ladders at the moment when their comrades issued from the trenches; and they were to ren-

der the attack either a real or a false one, according as circumstances should direct. The last clause in these instructions was not, perhaps, the least interesting to those affected by it; it was this:—“Ciudad Rodrigo must be carried by assault this evening at seven o’clock.”

As the preceding orders appeared at an early hour in the day, ample time was afforded for making every preparation which the circumstances of the case required, and both men and officers were fully and correctly apprised of the duties which they were expected severally to perform. They were not inattentive to these instructions, and exactly at the moment specified, each column took its station, in readiness to obey the signal of advance. It would be no easy matter to describe the state of a soldier’s feelings during the pause which ensued. The evening was calm and tranquil, and the moon, in her first quarter, shed over the scene a feeble light, which, without disclosing the shape or form of particular objects, rendered their rude outline distinctly visible. There stood the fortress, a confused mass of masonry, with its breaches like shadows cast upon the wall; whilst not a gun was fired from it, and all within was as still and motionless as if it were already a ruin, or that its inhabitants were buried in sleep. On our side, again, the trenches crowded with armed men, among whom not so much as a whisper might

be heard, presented no unapt resemblance to a dark thunder-cloud, or to a volcano in that state of tremendous quiet which usually precedes its most violent eruptions. But the delay was not of long continuance; at a few minutes past seven o'clock, the word was quietly passed that all things were ready, and the troops poured forward with the coolness and impetuosity of which British soldiers alone are capable, and which nothing could successfully oppose.

No piece of clock-work, however nicely arranged, could obey the will of its maker more accurately than the different columns obeyed that night the wishes of their chief; and his orders were, in consequence, executed at every point with the same precision and regularity as if he had been manœuvring so many battalions upon a revue plateau. General M'Kinnon's brigade, amidst showers of grape and musketry, rushed, without a check, to the foot of the great breach, and in spite of numerous obstacles, and the most determined resistance, succeeded in gaining the summit.

But a serious opposition awaited them there. The enemy, driven from the main wall, took shelter behind a retrenchment, in front of which they had dug a ditch of considerable width; and whilst our men were vainly endeavouring to pass it, a mine was suddenly sprung. The havoc oc-

casioned by that terrible explosion was prodigious, numbers of the bravest and most forward of the men being blown up and destroyed. Unfortunately for the army at large, the gallant M'Kinnon was among them; but the rest, nothing daunted by the fate of their comrades, only redoubled their exertions, with a courage which seemed to rise in proportion to the difficulties opposed to it. They were thus situated, when Major O'Toole's little column, which had acted under the guidance of Major Sturgeon upon the right, joined them; when finding that all their efforts were fruitless, and that it was impracticable to press further till the results of other attacks should be known, they established themselves among the ruins.

In the mean while, both the light division under Crawford, and the Portuguese brigade under Pack, were following up with equal resolution the measures pointed out to them. The former issuing from the convent, made for the lesser breach, their brave chief leading as few like himself could have led, when a musket-ball struck him in the arm, and penetrating the side, lodged in his lungs. He fell to the ground, and was borne from the field in a dying state. Almost at the same moment, Major Napier commanding the storming party, Colonel Colbourne of the 52nd, and General Vandeleur, all most distinguished and brave officers, received severe wounds, and the troops were left

to the guidance of accidental leaders, and their own bravery; but neither the one nor the other were wanting. The pause of a moment, and only of a moment, occurred, when, with a shout which was distinctly heard over the roar of musketry and cannon, they renewed the charge, and in five minutes had won the ascent. Then arose the cry of victory from every quarter; for General Pack's Portuguese had succeeded in their escalade, and the troops rushing along the ramparts, speedily opened the way to the third division, and the town was our own. The enemy fled in the utmost disorder. They were pursued from street to street, and from house to house, with the fury which is irrepressible among men flushed with conquest, and exasperated by the memory of comrades slain; and all who continued to offer the slightest resistance were immediately put to the sword. To the honour of British soldiers, however, be it recorded, that not a single life was taken in wantonness. He who threw down his arms was spared by the very hand which had been uplifted to destroy him, and hence out of a garrison which consisted originally of 1800 combatants, full 1500 were made prisoners.

It were vain for me to attempt any description of the scenes of plunder and confusion which now presented themselves in every quarter of the town. The firing, which had ceased for a moment, be-

cause the contest was at an end, was renewed, here and there, in the extravagance of triumph; whilst shouts and screams mingled fearfully with the groans of the wounded, and the outcries of men in a state of intoxication. Many houses likewise, in different districts, burst forth into flames, whether wantonly or accidentally excited it was impossible to determine; whilst the churches were ransacked, the wine and spirit cellars emptied, and for several hours every species of enormity was perpetrated. All these things occurring during the night, the darkness of which being but imperfectly dispelled by the light from the burning edifices, produced an effect which none can desire to experience again. At length the drunken dropped gradually asleep; the wounded were removed to temporary hospitals; and though of the houses already on fire the greater proportion were burned to the ground, the further progress of the flames was arrested; and by dawn on the following morning a degree of order was restored, such as few who beheld the condition of things immediately posterior to the assault could have anticipated.

The casualties among the allied forces, during the progress of this important siege, were, as might be expected, numerous; 9 officers and 217 men being killed, and 84 officers and 1000 men wounded; and of these 6 officers and 140 men were killed, and 60 officers and 500 men wounded,

on the night of the assault alone. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the loss of so many valuable lives was keenly felt, not only by private friends, but by the army in general; but among them all, there fell not one more universally nor more justly lamented than Major-general Crawford. He was an officer of whom the highest expectations had been formed, and who, on every occasion, found an opportunity to prove, that had his life been spared, the fondest hopes of his country would not have been disappointed; and he was a man, to know whom in his profession without admiring was impossible. To me his death occasioned that void which the removal of a sincere friend alone produces. From the moment of receiving his wound, he knew that all hope of recovery was idle; he lingered on for several hours, and at last submitted to his fate with the magnanimity of a hero, and the resignation of a Christian. Poor Crawford!—whilst the memory of the brave and the skilful shall continue to be cherished by British soldiers, thou wilt not be forgotten; and the hand which scrawls this humble tribute to thy worth must be cold as thine own, ere the mind which dictates it shall cease to think of thee with affection and regret.

The task does not devolve on me, as I have already more than once expressed, to enumerate those who, on the present occasion, peculiarly dis-

tinguished themselves. All did their duty, and beyond this a British soldier knows not how to proceed; because, when in the presence of an enemy, a British soldier considers his utmost exertions as called for, and therefore gives them. To the talents of Colonel Fletcher, chief engineer; of Major Dixon, director of the artillery; and of Major Sturgeon, of the staff corps, the highest praises were given by our illustrious chief; whilst to the bravery of Lieutenant Gurwood of the 52nd regiment, who, after leading the forlorn hope, escaped unhurt, he bore the most decided testimony, by presenting him with the sword of the captured governor. The fruits of the victory were, as I have already stated, 1500 prisoners, a very large quantity of ammunition and military stores, and no fewer than 321 pieces of cannon, of different calibres, but almost all serviceable.

Thus fell the important fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo. Its conqueror lost no time in putting the works once more in a state of defence; and long before Marmont, who was exerting himself to relieve it, could bring his troops into the field, the British army was in full march towards other and no less memorable triumphs.

I have now arrived at that period of the war in the Peninsula, when I am necessarily compelled to take leave of my readers.

A severe fever, caught on the banks of the

Guadiana, increased by fatigue and anxiety of mind, compelled me to solicit, when our army removed to the south, Lord Wellington's leave of absence to return to England for the recovery of my health.

To abler and more competent pens will the task be hereafter assigned, of giving to posterity the full and perfect details of the great events of this war, and especially of its glorious conclusion, of which these sheets are only, and that up to a certain period, a very weak outline. If, however, my humble undertaking should call into play the greater talents and abilities of others, it will not have been made in vain; and if I should be so fortunate as to carry the interest of my brother officers along with me in the précis of events, of which my description must now close, I will, next year, venture to submit to them, in a similar shape, my military recollections of the campaigns of 1813 and 1814 with the allied armies on the continent, where it was my fortune to proceed, under the gracious commands of my Sovereign, after I left the Peninsular army in 1812; first as Minister to the court of Berlin, and afterwards as Ambassador at the court of Austria.

**APPENDIX**

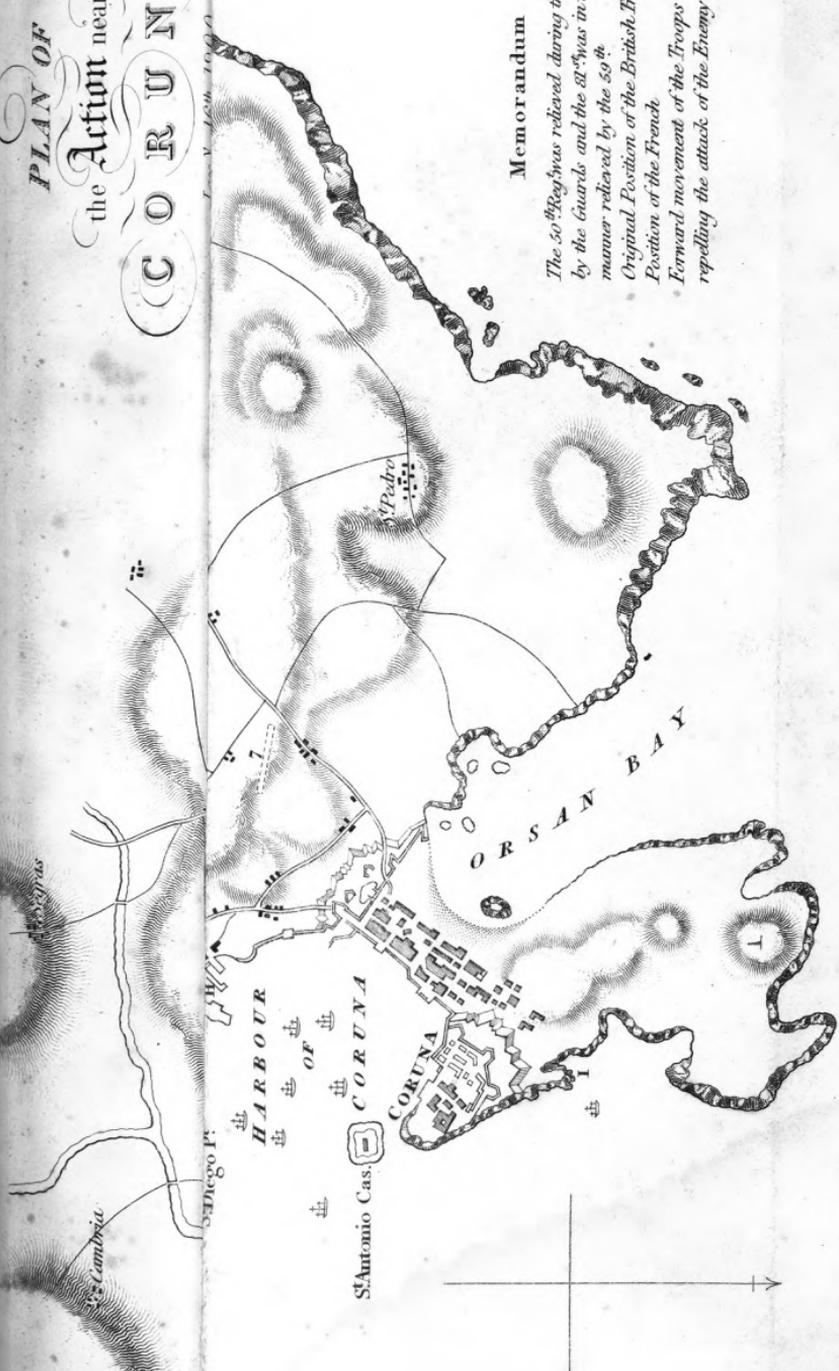
**OF**

**CORRESPONDENCE.**

ALPHABET

CORRESPONDENCE

PLAN OF  
the Action near  
**CORUNA.**



Memorandum

The 50<sup>th</sup> Regt was relieved during the Action by the Guards and the 81<sup>st</sup> was in the like manner relieved by the 59<sup>th</sup>.  
Original Position of the British Troops  
Position of the French  
Forward movement of the Troops repelling the attack of the Enemy.





**PASSAGE of the**

*On the 12<sup>th</sup>*

**By the British**

**COMMAND of LIEUT<sup>NT</sup> GEN<sup>L</sup>**

*in face of the French*

**MARSHAL de Conde**

**TO**

*From*

*Gu*

*ardenle*

*Payanha*

*Quinta das Antas*

*Trux d'Argaterra*

*Contumil*

*To Guimaraens*

*Ch. of Avintes*

*To Amarante*

**REFERENCE.**

- A. Arrival of the Right Column of the Army from Grijó.
- B. Arrival of the Left Column from the side of Aveiro.
- C. Passage of the Douro by a part of the R.G.L. under M.G. Murray at the Ferry of Avintes.
- D. Passage of the River by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot (Bull's) which was the first Corps that near the lower of Oporto under L<sup>t</sup> Gen<sup>L</sup> Paget.
- E. Buildings occupied by L<sup>t</sup> Gen<sup>L</sup> Paget to cover the Passage of the other Troops.
- F. Ferry where the remains of M.G<sup>L</sup> Hills Brig<sup>de</sup> crossed the Douro under M.G<sup>L</sup> Hill & B.G<sup>L</sup> Stewarts Brigade.
- G. Attack of the Enemy upon the Troops which first crossed the River.
- H. Position of the French Artillery.
- K. Battery opened against the right Flank of the Enemy Attacked.
- L. Advance of the Troops under M.G<sup>L</sup> Murray.
- M. Passage of the Troops under L<sup>t</sup> G<sup>L</sup> Sherbrooke in Boats brought from the opposite shore, the Bridge having been burnt by the Enemy the Night before.
- N. Advance of the Troops under L<sup>t</sup> Gen<sup>L</sup> Sherbrooke.
- O. Retreat of the French.
- P. Pursuit of British Cavalry and Light Infantry.

**PASSAGE of the RIVER DOURO,**

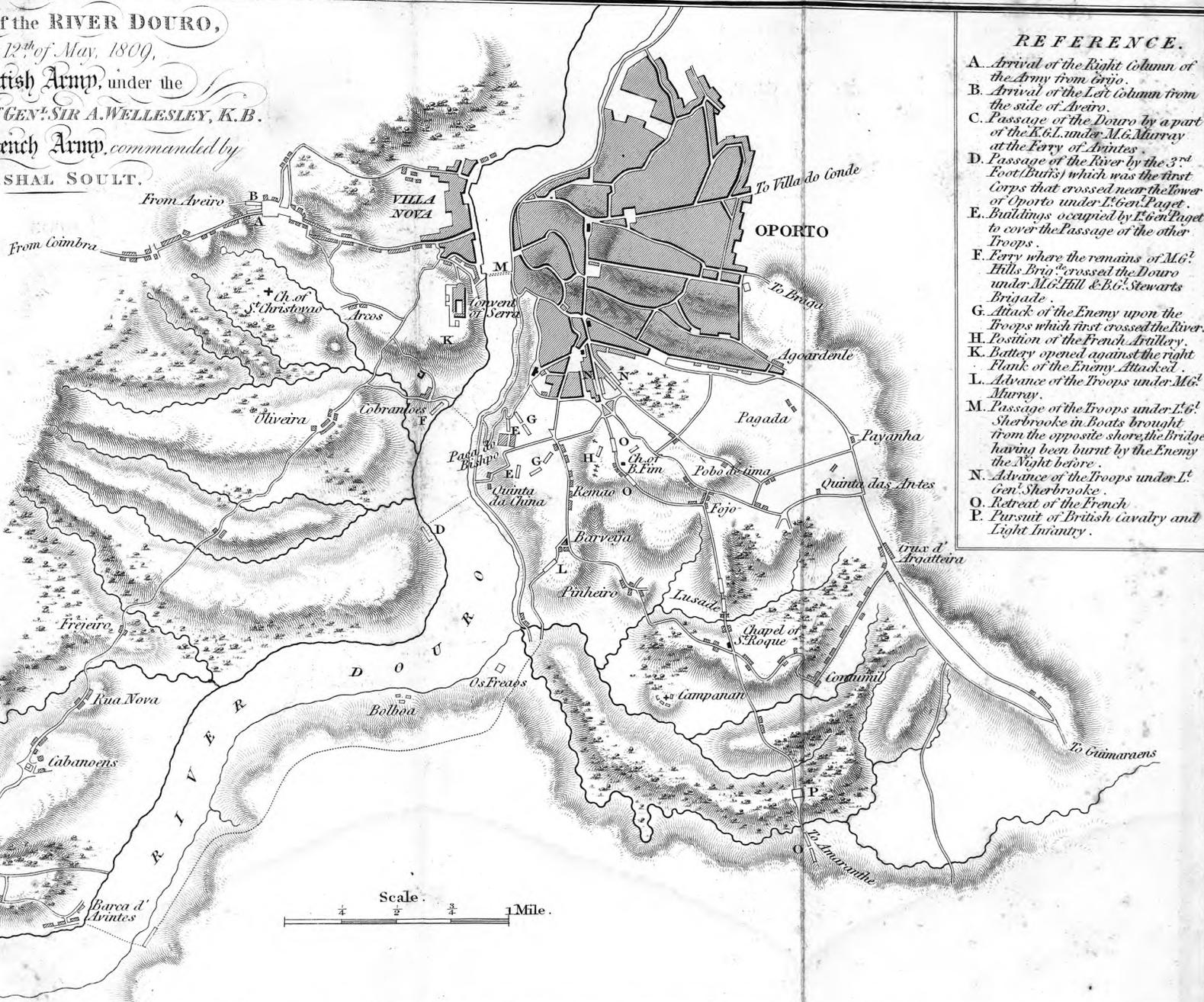
*On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 1800,*

By the **British Army**, under the

COMMAND of **LIEUT<sup>ENT</sup> GEN<sup>L</sup> SIR A. WELLESLEY, K.B.**

*in face of the French Army, commanded by*

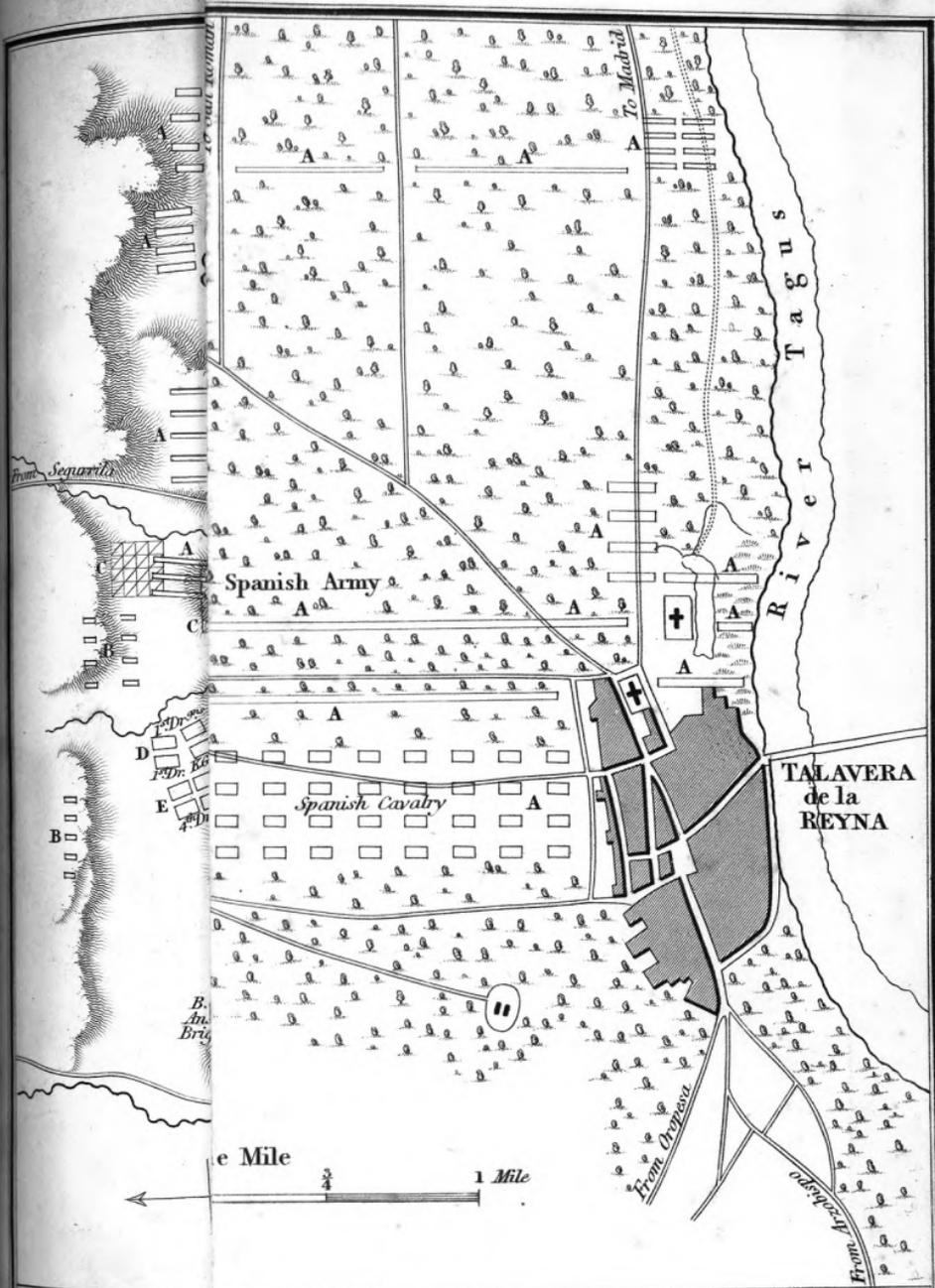
**MARSHAL SOULT.**



**REFERENCE.**

- A. Arrival of the Right Column of the Army from Oporto.
- B. Arrival of the Left Column from the side of Aveiro.
- C. Passage of the Douro by a part of the R.G.L. under M.G. Murray at the Ferry of Avintes.
- D. Passage of the River by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot (Buffs) which was the first Corps that crossed near the tower of Oporto under Lt. Gen. Paget.
- E. Buildings occupied by Lt. Gen. Paget to cover the Passage of the other Troops.
- F. Ferry where the remains of M.G. Hills Brig<sup>d</sup> crossed the Douro under M.G. Hill & B.G. Stewarts Brigade.
- G. Attack of the Enemy upon the Troops which first crossed the river.
- H. Position of the French Artillery.
- K. Battery opened against the right Flank of the Enemy Attacked.
- L. Advance of the Troops under M.G. Murray.
- M. Passage of the Troops under Lt. Gen. Sherbrooke in Boats brought from the opposite shore, the bridge having been burnt by the Enemy the Night before.
- N. Advance of the Troops under Lt. Gen. Sherbrooke.
- O. Retreat of the French.
- P. Pursuit of British Cavalry and Light Infantry.





Before the Hill was attacked that Night.

Back in the Morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>.

on our Right and Left Flanks.

After his Attack as shewn by C Also the Charge of B.G<sup>d</sup> Ansons

in advancing against the Hill as shewn by C.

to attack the Hill as shewn by C.

BATTI