

the first division was placed at Mealhada, on the great road which leads from Coimbra to Oporto; the fourth occupied the left of the position of Busaco, which it was now arranged to take up; whilst the third, leaving sufficient room for the first to form between, in case the attack should be made exclusively on the heights, unsupported by any attempt to turn our flank, took post in continuation of the line thus marked out. Such were the general arrangements entered into on the 25th; it remains now to describe the nature of the ground on which it was proposed to risk an action.

The position of Busaco consists of one huge mountain, which extends from the edge of the Mondego to the great Oporto road, and supports upon its summit the convent of Busaco, inhabited by monks of the order of La Trappe. It measures nearly sixteen miles in width from the right, where it eases itself off by gradual falls towards the Mondego to the left, where it ends in a variety of tongues of land, each as lofty, craggy, and rugged as itself. It is covered in front by gorges of indescribable depth, and defiles barely passable for sheep. The principal inconvenience attending it as fighting ground for our army, arose out of its extent; for it was manifestly too capacious to be occupied aright by sixty thousand men; whereas it is essential to the constitution of a military post,

that it be as easy of egress as it is difficult of access, and that its flanks as well as its centre be well secured. But where ground is too extensive for the troops destined to hold it, the latter object can never be perfectly attained; and in the present instance we could not but feel that any serious endeavour to turn our left by the Mealhada road, must in the end be attended with success. Strange to say, however, Marshal Massena,—an officer whose reputation came second to that of no marshal in the French service,—made no effort of the kind. On the contrary, he led his columns through the passes above described, and up the face of heights approximating very nearly to the perpendicular, and thus devoted them to destruction, from the hands of men, posted, as has been already mentioned, on their summits. Had he acted by the advice of Lord Wellington, I think he could not have adopted a course better calculated to insure a defeat, and that too with a loss to the conquerors trifling, even in proportion to what usually attends upon success.

On the 25th, the enemy's advanced-guard took possession of Santa Comba Dao, and pushed on to Martigao, were Crawford had strongly posted his corps. As it was Lord Wellington's wish that no affair of advanced-guards should take place, instructions had been issued for the light division to retire, on the first alarm, to the mountain of Busa-

co; and the movement was executed in admirable order, and in the presence of the enemy. Our troops could not, however, fall back so rapidly as to avoid, entirely, coming into occasional contact with their pursuers, and a good deal of firing, with a tolerably smart cannonade, was the consequence. But the loss on either side was trifling; although I had to regret the loss of a fine young man my aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Hoey, who was killed by a cannon-shot at my side. The light division now threw itself upon some high and commanding ground just above the great road to Vizeu, so as to communicate with the fourth division on its left, and with the first upon its right. For the latter division had been moved up from its station at Mealhada, and now took post upon the heights, where room had been allotted to it; and Hill and Leith being in full march over the Mondego, the line was in excellent progress towards formation. At length the arrangements were complete, and on the 27th, at day-break, the army was all drawn up in the following order.

On the right of the whole stood the second division, commanded by General Hill, guarding the declivities towards the Mondego, and flanked by the stream. Next to it came General Leith's corps, then General Picton's third division, then General Spencer's first division, then General Crawford's light division; and last of all, upon

the extreme left, stood the fourth division, under the command of General Cole. The cavalry were sent to the plains in front of Mealhada, where there was room for them to act ; and the artillery was distributed at different points, according as convenience of ground, or the prospect of an advantageous range directed.

I have said that the light division drew up upon some high and broken ground above the great road to Vizeu. The road in question, which conducts from Coimbra to the town just named, winds round the right of a projecting tongue of land, and passing through the village of Morteia, skirts the convent wall ; from which, to the summit of the mountain, there is the space of barely half a mile. On the 26th the enemy showed a strong force in this direction, as well as in front of that part of our position which was occupied by General Picton. Though they did nothing more than show themselves, it became very evident that Massena was really making ready to attack our formidable position, and we heartily congratulated one another on a prospect so satisfactory ; for it is impossible to conceive a piece of ground more defensible from all attempts in its front. The glacis of a fortress is not more bare nor open to the fire of its defenders ; whilst the abruptness of the ascent was of itself sufficient to render powerless, at least for a time, the heavily-loaded troops which



might accomplish it. No great while elapsed ere our wishes received their full accomplishment ; for on the following morning, soon after our line had been formed, the enemy advanced to the attack.

At six o'clock in the morning two heavy columns were seen to approach, the one along the road, so as to fall in with the light division, the other through a defile, in the direction of General Picton's post. Both attacks were made with great spirit and determination ; but the latter was evidently that upon which Massena mainly relied, and to insure the success of which he had taken every imaginable precaution. It was intrusted to an élite corps, appointed expressly for the service ; and it was headed by three of the most distinguished regiments in the French army ; the 32nd, 36th, and 70th. These were placed under the command of General Merle, an officer who had acquired a high reputation from his behaviour at Austerlitz ; and they certainly gave proof that neither they nor their leader had won a name which they were not worthy to wear. They pressed forward with a gallantry which drew forth the hearty plaudits, not of their friends only, but of their enemies ; and in spite of as heavy a shower of grape, round shot, and musketry, as it is easy to imagine, they actually gained the summit. They gained it too in good order, that is to say, they were formed in an instant after the ascent

was won; and had they been supported, they would have doubtless stood their ground for some time; but there was no support in their rear; and the 45th British, with the 8th Portuguese, met them with a bravery not inferior to their own, or that of any other corps in either army. The contest was warm, but it was not of long continuance; for the 88th arriving to the assistance of their comrades, instantly charged, and the enemy were borne over the cliffs and crags with fearful rapidity, many of them being literally picked out of the holes in the rocks by the bayonets of our soldiers. The troops employed in this attack consisted of two divisions of the corps of Regnier, one of which, under Merle, suffered the fate just described, whilst the other remained in reserve at the defile.

Whilst these things were going on in front of Picton's post, two divisions of the corps of Marshal Ney, one commanded by Loison, and the other by Mermot, bore down in like manner upon General Crawford. Both of these divisions took part in the assault, a third being left in reserve; and they advanced with great intrepidity over half the ascent, exposed only to a trifling fire from a few pieces of cannon. The 43rd, 52nd, and 95th, were in line there, and they permitted the enemy to approach till less than one hundred yards divided them; and then one volley from

right to left, coolly and deliberately given, thinned the ranks of the assailants; after which our troops, giving a loud and simultaneous cheer, rushed forward with the bayonet. Never was rout more complete than that which followed the movement. The enemy, unable to retreat and afraid to resist, were rolled down the steep like a torrent of hail-stones driven before a powerful wind; and not the bayonets only, but the very hands of some of our brave fellows, became in an instant red with the blood of the fugitives. More brilliant or more decisive charges than those executed this day by the two divisions which bore the brunt of the action, were never perhaps witnessed; nor could anything equal the gallantry and intrepidity of our men throughout, except, perhaps, the hardihood which had ventured upon so desperate an attack.

The loss of the French in these encounters was estimated at somewhere between five and six thousand men; ours fell considerably short of one thousand; but as one of their corps, that of Junot, had not yet been engaged, we naturally expected a repetition of the battle on the following morning. In this, however, we were deceived. Massena had already erred sufficiently in risking one attempt to force our heights; and he had learned a lesson which it was not probable that he would speedily forget. Instead, therefore, of again di-

recting his troops against our impregnable rocks, he was observed, soon after daylight on the 28th, to be drawing off from the late points of attack, and it was found that he was moving, with his entire force, upon the Mealhada road, with the evident intention of turning us. It was a movement for which we were not only prepared, but for which we had all along looked, as a measure of common prudence on the part of the enemy; and as we never calculated upon being able to retain Busaco after it should be executed, we now made ready to abandon the high grounds, and continue our retreat. As soon, therefore, as the dusk of the evening set in, we defiled to our left, throwing Hill's division once more across the river; and the rest of the corps marching during the 29th, on Decentecio, Botao, Eiros, and Mealhada, the line of the Mondego was, on the 30th, assumed.

As it was not Lord Wellington's design to make any stand, or risk a second battle on the Mondego, the army was put in motion again on the 1st of October; and the head-quarters, having halted at Redenha that night, came in on the 2nd to Leira. During these marches, the divisions of the army were kept as near as possible to one another: the right retiring by the main road, pushed directly upon Leira; the left, passing the river somewhat lower in its course, came in, under the guidance

of General Spencer, to the same line of march near Pombal; by which arrangement one wing was throughout at hand to support the other, had circumstances occurred to require it. But the enemy showed no disposition to harass us. Though they entered Coimbra almost at the moment of our quitting it, they suffered our rear-guard to march on without molestation; and they even halted during the remainder of that day, and the whole of the next, in the place. On the 3rd, however, they pushed forward strong patrols into Condeixa, towards Leira. Here, part of our magazine, containing corn and provisions, fell into their hands; but the magazine was captured, not because we were unable, but because we were unwilling to defend it. The fact is, that Lord Wellington had strictly prohibited the rear-guard from engaging in any affair which could, without compromising its own safety, be avoided; and the stores in question were abandoned, rather than that a loss of life, however trifling, should be experienced in their defence.

The army rested in Leira till the morning of the 5th, when Lord Wellington, having ascertained that the enemy were coming on in force, gave orders that the retreat should be resumed. This was done along the two great roads which lead to Lisbon, by Rio Major and Alcobaça, and on the same evening head-quarters were established in



the last-mentioned place ; but though no skirmishing occurred, nor any serious hardships fell to our lot, it was altogether one of the most distressing journeys which any individual in the army was ever called upon to perform. The proclamations which had been issued, requiring the inhabitants to abandon their homes as we fell back, were very generally attended to, and spectacles more afflicting than this prompt obedience on the part of the Portuguese presented, it were a hard matter even to imagine. Crowds of men, women, and children ; of the sick, the aged, and the infirm, as well as of the robust and the young, covered the roads and the fields in every direction. Mothers might be seen with infants at their breasts, hurrying towards the capital, and weeping as they went ; old men, scarcely able to totter along, made way chiefly by the aid of their sons and daughters ; whilst the whole way-side soon became strewed with bedding, blankets, and other species of household furniture, which the weary fugitives were unable to carry further. During the retreat of Sir John Moore's army, numerous heart-rending scenes were brought before us ; for then, as now, the people—particularly in Galicia—fled at our approach ; but they all returned, sooner or later, to their homes, nor ever dreamed of accumulating upon our line of march, or following our fortunes. The case was different here.

Those who forsook their dwellings, forsook them under the persuasion that they should never behold them again; and the agony which such an apprehension appeared to excite among the majority, exceeds any attempt at description. Nor was it on account of the immediate suffering of the country people alone that we were disposed, on the present occasion, to view the measure with regret. It could not but occur to us, that, though the devastating system must inevitably bear hard upon the French, the most serious evils would, in all probability, arise out of it, both to ourselves and our allies, from the famine and general distress which it threatened to bring upon a crowd so dense, shut up within the walls of a single city. There can be no question now, that this very measure, more perhaps than any other, preserved Portugal from subjugation, and England from defeat; but, at the moment, there were few amongst us, who seemed not disposed to view it with reprobation; because, whilst they condemned its apparent violation of every feeling of humanity and justice, they doubted the soundness of the policy in which it originated.

Whilst we were thus conducting ourselves, marching with deliberation, and sweeping before us all the resources of the country, the enemy had advanced as far as Leira, and seemed disposed to follow us up with the full vigour of the school in

which their leader had learned his tactics. Their videttes entered Leira about a couple of hours after our rear-guard quitted it, and they had, in consequence, before them a choice of two roads to Lisbon, one by the Tagus, the other by the sea. But on both we were equally well prepared to receive them, as the following description of the new arrangement of our forces will show.

It has been stated above, that in continuation of the retreat from Leira upon the lines, the headquarters of our army were established, on the evening of the 5th, at Alcobaça. From Alcobaça a further falling back was made upon Torres Vedras and Rio Major; and from the latter of these places the troops began, on the 10th, to move into the position. On that day General Hill's corps, which had returned from the Ponte de Marcella upon Thomar, arrived at Villa Franca; and on the following morning every division occupied the ground marked out for it, and all were in readiness, at a moment's notice, to assume the posts which they might be required to defend.

Though I have already laid before the reader something of a rude outline of the position of Torres Vedras, I am tempted at the present stage of my narrative, that he may be the better able to understand the plan of operations upon which it was proposed to act, to go rather more at length into its localities and general disposition. I am

willing to believe, likewise, that the repetitions which may be necessary, will be perused, even by the unmilitary reader, without disgust ; because it is to the wise occupation of that position, and to the judicious method pursued in maintaining it, that the ultimate success of the Peninsular war is to be attributed ; and because it will long continue, even in its rude outlines, to present to future generations an enduring testimonial to the sagacity and unconquerable firmness of our leader. With this preface, I proceed now to describe, in as accurate terms as I am able to employ, both the arrangement of the troops, and the nature of the champ de bataille, upon which the fate, not of Lisbon only, but of Europe itself was to be decided.

Along the neck of the Peninsula at the extremity of which Lisbon is built, there extend several ranges of high and rugged hills, intersected here and there by narrow passes, and covered, for the most part, by deep ravines and defiles, in the usual acceptation of the term, impassable. Along these, at the distance of perhaps 25 English miles from the city, Lord Wellington had selected two lines, one considerably in advance of the other, but both of tremendous strength ; and he had bestowed upon their fortification so much of care, and diligence, and science, as to place them almost equally beyond the reach of insult from any assailing force, however numerous and well supplied. The sys-

tem pursued on this occasion was quite novel, and the works erected were altogether such as were not to be met with under similar circumstances in any part of the world. It will not be necessary to enter at much length into the merits of the second line, because its strength was never tried; but of the first or more advanced force, the following will be found to contain a tolerably correct sketch.

This line rested its right upon the acclivities of Alhandra, on the summit of which several formidable redoubts were erected, and was flanked by the fire of a dozen gun-boats, at anchor in the Tagus. The faces of these hills were all carefully scarped; the road which led through them was destroyed; and it was with perfect justice concluded, that here, at least, our position might be pronounced impregnable. On the left of these heights lay a ravine or gully, called the pass of Maltao, the gorge of which was effectually blocked up by two formidable redoubts; whilst it was completely commanded, on one hand by the hills of Alhandra, and on the other by those of Armedia. The latter, like the former, were scarped, and otherwise rendered inaccessible; and they communicated with the centre of the position, which was a huge mountain, crowned by a redoubt more extensive than any other in the line. As this mountain overhung the village of Sobral, its castle kept completely at command the great road which



conducts from thence to Lisbon, and rendered it utterly hopeless for any body of men so much as to attempt a passage in that direction. On the left of this redoubt, again, some high and broken ground looked down upon Zebreira, and stretched in formidable shape towards Pataneira. Just behind that village there is a deep glen, succeeded by other hills, which cover the roads from Ribaldeira to Exara de los Cavalleiros and Lisbon; whilst on the left of the whole was a lofty mountain, which crowded up all the space between these roads and Torres Vedras. Such is a brief detail of the leading features in this position; than which it will be seen that, independently of all that art had done for it, few can be imagined more formidable; but when it is further understood that the ascents were all steep, rugged, and rocky; that strong vineyards and deep ground everywhere covered the front; and that, wherever natural obstacles chanced to be fewer in number, or less insuperable in kind than could have been desired, labour had not failed to supply them; and when these things are taken into consideration, an army once brought thither must either be false to itself, or it might defy all the force of the French empire seriously to molest it. It remains now to state in what order, and with what design, the troops were arranged for its defence.

On the right of the whole was posted General

Hill's corps, the British troops occupying the village of Alhandra, where they were kept ready to be moved to any point which seemed most to be threatened ; whilst the Portuguese stood prepared to throw themselves into the redoubts, and to defend them to the last extremity. Next to Hill's came Crawford's division, having the heights of Arruda, and the works attached to them, peculiarly intrusted to its care. Then came General Pack's Portuguese brigade ; the whole of which were stationed in the great redoubt of which I have already spoken as crowning the hill above Sobral ; whilst Sir Brent Spencer's division garrisoned the high ground above Zebreira, as far as the village of Pataneira. General Picton's right joined itself to Spencer's left, in rear of the last-named place, at the ravine which there broke in ; and Cole's division, connecting itself with Picton's, carried on the line across the hills, as far as the road to Exara de Cavalleiros and Lisbon. Last of all came General Campbell's corps, which occupying the mountain between the road and Torres Vedras, formed the extreme left of our army.

I have spoken of redoubts and other works, as giving additional strength to this stupendous position ; it is right that I should refer to them in terms somewhat more explicit. The reader is not, perhaps, ignorant, that in fortifying a line, such as that of Torres Vedras, for the support of a

large army in the field, the ordinary practice is to construct batteries and other points d'appui, which shall present as imposing a front as may be to the attacking force, but shall be open and utterly defenceless from the rear. In the present instance, however, the redoubts thrown up were not so much field-works as regular castles, many of which were capable of containing several hundreds, whilst one required no fewer than three thousand men to form its garrison. These were built as if each had been intended to stand a siege of six weeks, at the most moderate computation; they were placed in situations which rendered them quite as defensible from one side as from another; and they were all, to a certain extent at least, independent of those near them, and well sheltered from their fire, should they fall into the hands of the enemy. It was Lord Wellington's design to garrison these posts chiefly with the militia and least disciplined regiments; whilst he kept the whole of the British troops, and the élite of the Portuguese, free and unencumbered, to be employed as circumstances might require. By this arrangement he secured to himself the double advantage of a moveable army and a fortified place. Supposing the position to be forced, the forts were still there to interrupt the enemy's communications, and cut off their supplies; whilst the columns need only to be marched a few miles to

the rear, in order to assume ground even more defensible than that which they abandoned. I am not willing to detain the reader by any remarks of my own, at a period of the narrative so replete with interesting occurrences: but I cannot proceed further, without desiring to draw the attention of my brother soldiers in a particular manner not only to the subject of which I am now speaking, but to the whole plan of this campaign; because I am sure that a British army never took part in one better adapted to instruct it in the art of manœuvring on a great scale, nor consequently so well calculated to make efficient officers of those who shared in it, or are disposed to take the trouble of studying it as it deserves.

In the course of this narrative I have, in general, confined myself so much to the movements of the troops placed immediately under the orders of Lord Wellington, that the reader, were he not instructed from different sources, might remain ignorant that there were other corps of greater or less efficiency employed at different points in our favour, during the entire summer. These were, a body of militia under Colonel Trant, which moved hither and thither as circumstances seemed to require; General Silveira's army, consisting of some eight thousand irregulars; a portion of the Lusitanian Legion, under Colonel Wilson; besides bands of guerillas in all directions. It is deserving

of record, that Lord Wellington kept the whole of these irregular troops among the mountains and fastnesses, in points of perfect security, till the opportunity arrived for bringing them into play. At what moment this occurred, and to what uses they were eventually turned, will best be understood by glancing back through the whole of the campaign, from its opening up to the present hour.

The fall of the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, instead of disclosing at once the plan upon which Massena was preparing to act, left us for some time as much in the dark as ever; inasmuch as Regnier's corps remained on the left of the Tagus, and seemed still to threaten the division of General Hill. The consequence was, that an opinion generally prevailed in our army—and I have reason to believe that it was embraced by the Commander-in-chief—that he would make his main push upon our right flank, and amusing us in front, follow up our movements with one corps only. The defences of the Zezere were, under these circumstances, naturally looked to by us as of paramount importance; and it was chiefly to secure them, that General Leith's corps was formed at Thomar, and kept in reserve. Contrary to all expectation, however, and in direct defiance of every ordinary rule of military manœuvre, Massena left our right unmolested; and though he was



compelled to move upon a much larger portion of the circumference of the circle than we were, he threw his whole army, in masterly style, to the north bank of the Mondego. He was quite aware that, did we perceive this movement, Hill could be brought into junction with us within a shorter space of time than would be requisite to connect Regnier with himself; and he knew also that the movement could hardly be made without our knowledge. Massena, therefore, adopted his plans upon principles more deep and more subtile than usually guide men in their undertakings. By the less observing, it was affirmed that he had chosen the only road which was impassable for artillery; and that he moved his army in one line, merely that a reasonable excuse might be made for the delay on which he had already determined. There is not, however, justice in these notions. Massena took a road by which, and by which alone, he was enabled to avoid the whole of the defences of the Zezere, the strong positions of Sarsedas and Ponte de Marcella, and, I may add, the very rock upon which he chose to make temporary shipwreck of his prospects, the line of Busaco; for had he persisted in his prudent course, and followed at once the path by the Sierra de Caramala, he might have arrived at the point where he now stood, within a few leagues of Lisbon. Now let attention be

paid to the plan of operations, by which Lord Wellington contrived to render all the talent and prudence of his skilful adversary of no avail.

The first measure which our chief adopted was this: he caused an excellent road to be made on the south side of the Mondego, which extended all the way from Celerico to Ponte de Marcella, and beyond it to Coimbra. His next step was to provide against the delays and confusion to which the enemy, who moved in a single continuous column, were subject. For this purpose, as he had determined, on many accounts, not to risk an action on the frontier, he took the precaution to throw his divisions and brigades along the great gorge, extending from Celerico to the Alva; and he so arranged them, as that when the army began to move, the troops followed one another by stages, in the utmost regularity, and without any of that bustle which a march en masse unavoidably occasions. Possessed of these advantages, Lord Wellington saw, clearly enough, that it was in his power, in the event of Massena's advance by any single road, to cross the Mondego with his whole force, and to throw himself, whenever he chose, between the enemy and Coimbra. As soon, therefore, as Massena's designs were satisfactorily ascertained, he fixed, with a master's eye, upon the banks of the Dao and the Criz, as the proper spots at which to cast impediments in the way of the

French; whilst he should perform the arduous and enterprising operation, of throwing the entire of his infantry, artillery, and stores, by wretched fords, and still more wretched bridges, across a river of no ordinary dimensions or difficulties.

All was accomplished in the very order and manner which he had in his own mind chalked out. The bridges on the Dao and the Criz were then destroyed with astonishing celerity. Crawford and Pack, with the advanced-guard, were thrown across at Santa Comba Dao, and the rest of the army accomplished a very brilliant manœuvre with the utmost accuracy and perfection; for not a gun got out of its place during the continuance of the march, and when the moment of inquiry arrived, everything was found in the exact spot which it had been intended to occupy. But the most extraordinary feature of all remains yet to be noticed. From the instant when he fixed upon the position of Busaco, Lord Wellington expressed his firm conviction that he would be attacked there; and he adhered to that opinion, in opposition to the sentiments of every functionary by whom he was surrounded. There was a degree of prescience in this for which it is impossible accurately to account; for there cannot be a question as to the course which the enemy ought to have adopted, and which it was their wisdom to adopt. Instead of dashing themselves madly

against us, they ought to have continued to take ground to their right, and so gone round a stupendous mountain, which the slightest exercise of military penetration might have shown that they need not hope to pass. It is true that at this time Colonel Trant, with his corps, ought to have taken post at Sardao: he had received orders to proceed thither, with a view of strengthening our left; and it may be that the enemy had been led to think of him as actually in that situation. But had the case been so, it requires no depth of discernment to discover that all the resistance which it was in his power to offer, would have availed nothing against three French corps; more especially when it is considered that there are numerous passes from Mortagao, by the Vouga, into the Oporto road, which Trant possessed neither force nor means adequate to watch. It were absurd, therefore, to speak of this notion, as at the time it was not unusual to speak of it, as in any degree influencing Massena in the course which he pursued; for it requires only a glance over the map to convince any one that all effort to stop the enemy in the flat country between the Busaco and the sea, must have been fruitless. Had they chosen to bring their united force into that arena, we could have done nothing to arrest their progress; and hence it is, that I speak of Lord Wellington's prescience as something quite

out of the ordinary course of events, inasmuch as Busaco was a position simply and solely because the enemy thought fit by attacking to give to it that character.

That the success which crowned our efforts at Busaco was productive of the most beneficial consequences, and that the manœuvres which preceded the battle were all admirable in their kind, admits not of a doubt. By means of these the enemy's arrival at Coimbra was delayed, and time given for the removal of the inhabitants; an advantage which became the more vital, as we had been disappointed in our expectation of an attack upon the position of Ponte de Marcella. Far be it from me, therefore, to throw out so much as an insinuation that everything was not conducted with consummate ability and admirable foresight. Yet is it as clear as the sun at noon-day, not only that Massena might have passed us by without fighting, but that, when we abandoned the ground of our victory at Busaco, we did so, not because Trant had failed in reaching his allotted station, but because the ground was in itself indefensible. The truth is, that Massena, in this campaign, by no means supported the reputation which his previous services had obtained for him, or came up to the opinion which we had formed of him, as a master of the military art. Throughout our retreat, he scarcely ever followed us up with the



vigour which generally attends the movements of a pursuing army, and all his operations were marked by a languor and supineness which surprised not less than they gratified us. It seemed as if the French soldiers had already learned to stand in fear of us, or that they had ceased to be the men before whom the nations of the north one after another gave way. Had we been at all pushed, hampered as we were with the whole population of the country, it would have been impracticable, at more than one place, to hinder stores and even stragglers from falling into the enemy's hands; but from the hour of our first movement, up to the moment of our arrival in the lines, not an effort was made so to harass us. It is time, however, that I should cease from this somewhat technical dissertation, and resume, where I permitted it to slip, the thread of my story.

During the last week of our retrogression the rain fell in uninterrupted torrents; flooding all the plains, cutting up the roads, and swelling every mountain-stream to a roaring cataract. In spite, however, of the difficulties thence arising, and nothing daunted by the numerous privations which threatened to befall his army in an exhausted country, Massena continued his march; driving us back upon our strength, our resources,

our magazines, and our provisions, whilst his own were suffering continual diminution, and his communications with the rear becoming daily more and more insecure. The truth is, that both parties were now committed to a desperate game. On our side the chances of success were, doubtless, infinitely greater than on the side of the enemy, inasmuch as our position was excellent, our troops were fresh and in high spirits, our supplies were abundant, and the capital in our rear was tranquil ; but we could not conceal from ourselves that the game was still desperate, as well with us as with them. Were we, by any fatality, to suffer a defeat ; were the French to force our lines, and make themselves masters of our intrenchments, through the imbecility or treachery of their defenders, or through any other of those accidents to which war is ever liable, the chances were, that neither army nor ships would ever escape from the Tagus. We were therefore in the situation of men about to make their last throw, and to stake upon it, not temporary prosperity, but actual existence. The French, on the other hand, whilst they advanced against us, plunged into a district where means of subsistence must soon be wanting to them, and left their rear to be acted upon by clouds of irregulars, whom Lord Wellington now summoned from their fastnesses for the purpose.

The bodies to which I allude were, five thousand men under Trant, which were hurrying along the road from Oporto to Coimbra; a similar force of militia under Wilson, which had already arrived at Busaco, and had taken some prisoners; two distinct corps, the one estimated at fifteen thousand men, under Silveira, the other at eight or ten thousand men, under Bacillar, which were advancing from the north; besides numerous straggling bands, all animated by the same feeling of deadly hatred towards the French. Now these corps, though very inferior to regular troops, were still capable of creating constant alarm; inasmuch as they were ever at hand to cut off convoys, to destroy stragglers, to surprise magazines, and to harass the rear-guard; whilst in front the prospect of a resistance was held out, which Massena could not contemplate without the most serious apprehension. That the enemy considered their situation one of extreme peril and hazard, was distinctly proved by the state of inactivity into which they soon fell; as if they felt their inability to perform that which their wishes prompted, and yet were unwilling to resign all hope without at least one effort to realise it.

In the mean while Lord Wellington, whose exertions were unintermitting, and whose activity of body and mind surpassed all that could have