

rations seemed to imply that they meditated nothing more than defensive operations during the winter. It was very evident, likewise, that General Hill's march had seriously alarmed them for the safety of their expected reinforcements; and that they looked to Abrantes with apprehension, rather than with any hope of being able to make themselves masters of it; for they broke up the roads which lead from thence to Punhete, and otherwise strove to interrupt all communication between the Zezere and the town.

I have spoken hitherto of the dispositions of the French general in terms more vague perhaps than their nature, and the results to which they promised to lead, seem to demand. The line which Massena at present occupied was one of great extent—insomuch that it might, at almost any point, be pierced, and the position of Santarem, and the troops cantoned there, completely isolated; yet was it one, taking into consideration certain disadvantages under which we laboured, demonstrative of judgment in the individual who selected it. Were we disposed to try its strength, we must advance to the attack over a country low and flat, and at present everywhere under water, leaving, at the same time, numerous openings by which a spirited enemy might, in the mean while, penetrate into our lines in the rear. Now, in spirit and enterprise, no one can accuse French soldiers of

being deficient, and as they were aware of our difficulties, little doubt could be entertained that they would greedily take advantage of them. On the other hand, Massena had possessed himself of a district rich in corn; he possessed ample stores of cattle; and he enjoyed the prospect of living at least as well as he could do in any part of Spain. His communications with his rear were now more secured by means of the troops whom he had lately brought up; his flanks were equally safe, notwithstanding the proximity of Abrantes; and as most of the country people whom we had swept away with us had little by little returned to their homes, there appeared to be no difficulty whatever in his establishing himself where he was during the winter. But if such were really his design, why continue to crowd forward so many masses, which, were it intended to pass any length of time in a state of quiet, had much better be dispersed in cantonments more remote from one another? His present mode of proceeding must lead to a consumption of his means more rapid by far than was accordant with sound policy;—could it be that Massena entertained serious thoughts of resuming the offensive at once? This was a grave question at the moment; and it involved many other considerations, not less important and weighty than itself.

It was not to be expected that the enemy would

a second time make their attempt upon Lisbon by one side of the Tagus only, leaving to us the undisputed command of that river, and of both of its banks. They had already suffered so much from their neglect on this head, that nothing short of infatuation could lead them into it again. On the contrary, it required but a moderate degree of foresight to discover, that let the attempt be made when it would, a strong corps would be pushed along the left of the river, and the most strenuous exertions set on foot to molest the harbour, and all that came out and in, from the point of Almada. It accordingly became a matter of serious importance to us, that a position should be marked out and strongly fortified on the one bank as well as on the other. This was the more necessary, as, although Admiral Berkeley, when first consulted, had given it as his decided opinion, that the lines of Torres Vedras with the inner circle of works about Fort St. Julien would, at any moment and under any circumstances, secure, in case of need, the safe embarkation of the troops, the late alarm induced him to come to a different persuasion; and he now conceived, that unless something were done to fortify the left as well as the right side of the harbour, the shipping, in case of a reverse at our lines, would be exposed to danger. Guided in part by this consideration, and in part by the conviction, that such a chain of posts would enable him to

employ Hill's or any other corps with perfect security on the opposite bank, Lord Wellington determined to construct there an intrenched position, similar to that which he had constructed at Torres Vedras; and early in the winter the engineers, with as many troops and artificers as could be spared for the purpose, were employed in its formation.

The new line of redoubts extended across that neck of land which is formed by a bed of the river on one side, and by an inflexion of the sea on the other; and it was of a formidable nature. In addition to this, great care was bestowed in strengthening the inner circle of Fort St. Julien, and at both points the heaviest ordnance at our command, chiefly twenty-four pounders, were mounted. By this means our capabilities of defence were brought to a state of perfection, as high as was compatible with the end proposed, and the difficulties to be overcome. But after all, the great question was, whether, in case of an extremity, any works would suffice to cover the escape of an army so numerous as that now under Lord Wellington's command. There could be no doubt that both banks of the river were well guarded—that is to say, the new lines around Almada effectually covered the southern side; whilst the fortifications about St. Julien protected the bay and place of embarkation in all directions; but the question still remained to be

answered,—was it possible for a force of forty thousand men to escape in the face of such an army, as should be capable of driving it from the double line of Torres Vedras, back to the sea? It was quite evident that nothing short of an overwhelming superiority in numbers could ever force our first lines of defence. That superiority, however, were it such as to obtain this advantage, would likewise be competent to bear down all opposition which might afterwards be offered; and therefore our surest hope, I say not of ultimate triumph, but even of safety, lay in our success in the field. Of success, however, we must be doubtful, unless support should be given to us with the same unsparing liberality with which it was afforded to the enemy; and hence all felt, even now when the tide seemed to have turned slightly in our favour, that at no period since the commencement of the struggle did we stand in greater need of fresh troops of all arms and descriptions from England. There could be little doubt that Napoleon would, at length, be roused from the apparent apathy with which he had hitherto regarded the affairs of Portugal. The probability was, that the return of spring at the latest would bring to Massena such an addition of strength as we, with our present numbers, could not hope successfully to oppose in the field; and then we should be compelled to retire once more within our lines,

and the war would become one, not of personal contests, but of resources. Now, though we had heretofore sustained this species of warfare successfully, it was not to be expected that we could continue to do so for ever; and hence our most fervent wishes were, either that Massena might find himself under the necessity of abandoning Portugal before his supplies could reach him, or that we might receive such an addition to our means, as would enable us to bring matters to the issue of a battle, with something like a fair prospect of victory.

Whilst we were thus speculating, and whilst part of our people were employed in giving additional strength to the works in our rear, few events took place calculated to exert any degree of influence over the final issue of the war. I have mentioned the arrival of five thousand men at Massena's cantonments, and spoken of them as forming part of a considerable division, which the advance of Drouet's corps, and its occupation of the posts upon the frontier, set at liberty to move towards the front. The remainder followed their leading brigades, but after reaching the Zezere, retreated again, with the loss of many hundred men, through the operation of parties of guerillas upon their rear and flanks. For some days they were not heard of; but at length a report came in, that a corps had made its appearance on the Coa,

and that having crossed that stream, it was in full march towards the front. Whether this were the same body which, after reaching the Zezere, had fallen back without so much as opening a communication with Massena, we found it impossible accurately at this time to ascertain; indeed, our information went no further than to establish the fact, that it consisted of about sixteen thousand men, and that its march was conducted with great deliberation, as if to protect a convoy. But the impression made upon us was, that the corps in question either consisted solely of the same troops who had formerly made an attempt to join, or that they and part of Drouet's corps had united to make the number; and the information which we afterwards received went to satisfy us that the latter instructions had been correct. Though harassed as the rest had been, they succeeded in reaching their destination; and they made up the whole of the additional force which Massena received during the winter.

In the mean while, the French Marshal was waiting anxiously for advices from Paris, whither he had despatched General Foy, some weeks previously, with a statement of the situation and prospects of his army.¹

¹ I have noticed this mission, chiefly because it furnishes me with an opportunity of saying a few words touching statements

The position which he had taken up at Santarem, however, he carefully and industriously improved, by covering the face of the hill with three lines of abatis, or otherwise intrenching the corps to which its defence was intrusted. It ought to be observed here, that though Santarem lay considerably in advance of the rest of his line, and was, as I have already hinted, to a certain degree, isolated and detached, it was not on that account the less favourable to his general defence. On the contrary, though other points might be easily pierced, no advantage could be taken of the success obtained, whilst this projecting post remained in the hands of the enemy; whilst its natural and artificial strength were both such, as to render any attempt upon it, with our present means, in the highest degree hazardous and uncertain. Thus

which have appeared in a History of the Peninsular War by General Foy, and which has of late attracted some attention among his countrymen. The General, on his arrival at Paris, published in the *Moniteur* a variety of accounts, relative to the conduct of his fellow-soldiers, and the dispositions of the English army. In these I can by no means concur. For example: He assured the French public, that whilst multitudes daily came over from our camp, the crime of desertion was hardly known in the French army; whereas the returns in my possession distinctly prove that we took in no fewer than 733 deserters in the course of three months. But I feel delicacy in pressing, as an adverse military writer, our differences of opinion further.

were we kept at bay by a line, abundantly accessible in every direction save one ; because from that one our own flanks and rear were in danger, should we venture to try the fortune of an action in any other quarter.

There is but one other circumstance to which I consider it necessary to allude before closing this chapter, and with it the history of the campaign of 1810. December was far advanced, when an officer attached to the staff of Massena's army, who was proceeding towards Ciudad Rodrigo in the disguise of a peasant, fell into the hands of some of our flying parties, and was brought in to head-quarters. From him we learned that the Marshal had received no communications from France since he first entered Portugal, and that he was now labouring under the greatest anxiety for the arrival both of intelligence and instructions. Our prisoner had been sent, it appeared, to meet whatever corps or messengers might be upon the way for the purpose of hurrying them on with as few delays as possible ; and though he was evidently a man in whom no confidence had been reposed, he spoke with so great an appearance of candour and openness, that we felt little disposed to doubt the truth of his assertions. He informed us that Massena had resolved not to attack our lines, unless he should be reinforced by a corps of twenty-five or thirty thousand men ; and that in

case these failed in arriving, he had determined to fall back, for the winter, by Castello Branco and Alcantara, into Spain. The advantages which he proposed to obtain by this movement were, a concentration with the armies operating in that portion of the Peninsula, and the reduction of the city of Badajoz, which would enable him, on the return of spring, to debouch once more into Portugal, with two large armies, one in the Alentejo, and the other on the right bank of the Tagus. Our informant further assured us, that instead of having corn and supplies in abundance at their command, the French were suffering grievously for everything. Their ammunition, their medicines, their shoes, their clothing, and provisions, were all at the lowest ebb; whilst their linen, an article upon which the welfare of an army depends in no ordinary degree, was almost entirely exhausted. Finally, he said that Massena was on bad terms with all his generals, Loison and Freire being the only individuals among them with whom he kept up any great intimacy; that there were full ten thousand sick in the hospitals; and that the entire force of infantry and cavalry which they were capable of bringing under arms, did not exceed forty thousand men.

The only fact in all this information which we felt disposed to question, was, the reported design of Massena to abandon Portugal. There ap-

peared to be no necessity for this measure, and many good reasons against it; and, therefore, we still inclined to the opinion, that whether he withdrew behind the Mondego or not, he would not withdraw further, but endeavour, keeping his communications open all the while with his rear, to obtain possession of as large a portion of the country as might be practicable. This, however, he would do, only provided he were left to the guidance of his own judgment; for, should a peremptory order to advance arrive from Paris, advance he must and would at all hazards. In the latter case, we were aware, from other sources, that he was prepared to sacrifice twenty thousand men in the attempt to possess himself of our lines; and that the attempt would be made both with judgment and vigour, we clearly foresaw. But of the result of any such endeavour, no one could for a moment doubt; and hence no one looked forward to the probability of its occurrence with the slightest alarm, or even anxiety.

Such was our state, and such our prospects and expectations, during the winter of 1810. On the side of Abrantes all was safe; the French having resolved, and wisely resolved, not to besiege it; whilst Silveira, who on the approach of the reinforcements had retired across the Coa, was again in readiness to act, as soon as an opening should be given on the rear of the enemy. In the mean

while, Trant and Bucellar were on the alert at Coimbra; and Wilson, retreating from Espinhel, threw himself with his corps on the other side of the Mondego. The latter movement, was, indeed, on one account, a subject of regret to us, inasmuch as it deprived us of our readiest and surest source of intelligence, which could henceforth be obtained only by circuitous routes; but it was made under the impression that a further continuance in Espinhel would be hazardous, and could not be risked. With respect to the French, again, they, like ourselves, rested quiet. Their position was, as I have already stated, a good one, and it was now greatly improved by their obtaining permanent possession of one bank of the Mondego; by which not only their flank, but all their marches from the rear were, to a certain degree, secured. But there were a variety of causes at work competent, in due time, to disturb this state of apparent tranquillity; and the spring can hardly be said to have set in, ere they came powerfully into operation.

Before closing this chapter, which terminates the campaign of 1810, it would be injustice not to record the extraordinary zeal, ability, and activity, which were displayed in two departments of our army; I mean, the commissariat under Sir R. Kennedy, and the medical department under Dr. Frank. It is not my province to eulogise; but as

the existence and life of the soldier depended upon the direction of the latter with his valuable assistants, and the comfort and sustenance upon the former, it is impossible that I should refrain, as adjutant-general of the army, from adding my mite of gratitude to these two very meritorious public officers. And I must say that, when Dr. Frank afterwards from illness left the army, it occasioned one general sentiment of deep public regret.

CHAPTER III.

State of affairs on the southern frontier—Advance of Soult against Badajoz—Capture of Olivença, and investment of Badajoz—General Mendizabal defeated, and Badajoz taken—Campo Mayor reduced—Massena breaks up from Santarem, and retreats into Spain—Marshal Beresford marches towards Badajoz—Attack of a French convoy at Campo Mayor—The British corps passes the Guadiana, reduces Olivença, and invests Badajoz—Lord Wellington visits this corps, and gives directions for the siege—Is recalled to the north, where the army remains in position round Fuentes de Honor.

BEFORE pursuing further the fortunes of Massena, and the movements of the divisions immediately opposed to him, it will be necessary, in as few words as possible, to make the reader acquainted with certain transactions which had been going on elsewhere.

Whilst the whole of the allied army was collected in the lines of Torres Vedras, and its attention turned almost exclusively to the defence of Lisbon, Soult, having assembled about thirteen or

fourteen thousand men in the south of Spain, advanced on Badajoz, for the purpose of effecting a diversion on the side of Alentejo, and opening a communication across the Tagus with Massena. Generals Ballasteros and Mendizabal, who, on the departure of Romana, commanded in that quarter, found themselves unable to oppose him. The former accordingly moved to his right upon Salvatierra and the lower parts of the Guadiana; whilst the latter, leaving seven battalions with a brigade of field artillery in Olivença, retreated across the river. Olivença was not a place of extraordinary strength; and had the reverse been the case, the neglect of Mendizabal to supply it with a competent store of provisions would have rendered the strength of its fortifications profitless: it was blockaded on the 11th of January, and on the 22nd famine compelled the garrison to surrender.

Having taken measures for rendering Olivença a place of arms in support of his future operations, Soult detached Mortier's corps on the 26th to invest Badajoz; and the investment was at once completed on the left of the Guadiana by the infantry; whilst the cavalry, under General Latour Maubourg, patrolled round the right. No great while elapsed ere the investment was converted into a siege. Ground was broken on the 28th, and an attack directed against the Pardaleras outwork, which was battered from the Sierra del Viento,

and enfiladed from a parallel at two hundred and fifty yards distant; and a breach being effected on the 11th of February, the Pardaleras was, on the same night, stormed, and carried with very little opposition.

As soon as the movement of Marshal Soult was known at Cartaxo, Lord Wellington despatched his Spanish corps into the Alentejo, that it might co-operate with Mendizabal for the protection of that frontier; and he pointed out a position to the north of Badajoz, having its right protected by Fort St. Christoval, and its front covered by the Gevora, as the best which the Spanish army could take up, for the purpose of keeping open a communication with the town in case it should be attacked. Unfortunately, the brave Romana, who, more than all the rest of the Spanish generals put together, had obtained and merited our confidence and respect, was unable to accompany his corps. He was now labouring under a severe malady, which, on the 27th of January, terminated his existence. But the division made good its position; the post recommended was assumed on the 9th of February; and it proved a constant source of anxiety to the besiegers, and of confidence to the besieged, by covering the introduction of numerous supplies into the place. The enemy saw its importance, and determined, at all hazards, to carry it; and the improvidence of the Spanish General

was not long in furnishing them with the opportunity which they so much desired.

It happened that a howitzer or two, from the opposite bank of the river, were enabled to throw a few shells into the ground of the Spanish encampment, which, without doing much real mischief, harassed and annoyed the men. Mendizabal, very unwisely, paid to the matter a degree of attention which it did not merit; and to get rid of the nuisance, moved the whole of his army to its left, completely out of the protection of Fort St. Christoval. The enemy perceived his error, and lost not a moment in availing themselves of it. Mortier established a flying bridge upon the Guadiana above the town, and crossed over in the night of the 18th; whilst six thousand men from the besieging army forded the Gevora, and attacked the Spaniards at daylight. The resistance made was as trifling as might have been expected from bad troops, deprived of all the advantages of position; and out of nine thousand infantry, and a brigade of Portuguese cavalry, of which Mendizabal's corps had consisted, only three thousand five hundred made their escape. Three thousand fled to Badajoz, where they were shut up with the rest of the garrison; whilst five hundred retired upon Elvas, under the command of Don Carlos de España.

The siege was now carried on with renewed

vigour, and the Governor being killed, the command devolved upon General Imaz, an officer who felt no disposition to emulate the renown of Palafox and Alvarez. A breach, exceedingly imperfect in kind, was no sooner effected, than Imaz proposed a capitulation; and on the 11th of March, at a moment when he knew, from telegraphic despatches, that Massena was in full retreat, and that forces were on their way to relieve the place, he marched out nine thousand troops into the ditch, who layed down their arms to a similar number of French infantry, with some six or eight hundred cavalry, the total amount of the besieging army. Had the slightest resolution existed in the breast of that man, Badajoz might have been preserved; and all the blood which was afterwards spilled in retaking it, might, as a necessary consequence, have been saved.

Mortier's next business was to invest Campo Mayor, with a corps of five thousand infantry, and six hundred cavalry. Campo Mayor is a large frontier town, supplied originally with tolerable fortifications; but which had of late been sadly neglected, and were of course falling to decay. Five thousand men is the smallest number which would be required to garrison it; but at present it was held by no more than two hundred militia, under the command of Major Tallaia, of the Portuguese engineers. That officer's means in cannon

and stores were as feeble as his force in men; there were but five pieces of artillery mounted on the ramparts; yet he compelled the enemy to proceed against him with all the order of a siege; nor was it till a practicable breach had been formed in the body of the place, that he would listen to any proposal of surrender. At last, however, seeing his defences ruined, and the enemy prepared to storm, he stipulated for a delay of twenty-four hours, in the hope that relief might arrive; and none appearing, he very reluctantly gave up the town on the 23rd of March.

In the mean while affairs were drawing rapidly to a crisis on the north side of the Tagus. Though their change of situation conduced, for a short time, very considerably to the comforts of Massena and his army, it was quite impossible that a country already exhausted could long support the burden which the presence of some fifty or sixty thousand men, besides horses and other animals, laid upon it; and this the French General began, by degrees, to feel very sensibly. His troops became every day more and more sickly; provisions became every day scarcer, and forage was not to be procured by any exertions. The reinforcements, too, for which he had waited so long and so patiently, came not up, by any means, to his wants or his wishes; indeed, the fresh regiments marched into his line were not sufficiently nume-

rous to fill up the gaps which the casualties of war had already occasioned there. Massena felt that the moment for offensive operations had passed away. Whether he regretted that he had not hazarded an attack upon our lines, at a moment when their yet imperfect state held out some chances of success, I know not ; but certain it is, that he soon began, after his assumption of the position at Santarem, to prepare for a retreat. Parties were continually employed upon the Zezere, constructing bridges, and throwing up works for their defence ; his sick and wounded were gradually, quietly, and cautiously, transferred to the rear ; and at the beginning of March 1811, there remained in his camp, besides some heavy artillery of little value, only the men and horses fit for duty, with as many stores, guns, ammunition-waggons, and tumbrils, as appeared necessary for their use. Everything, however, was done with so much address, that except of the fact that two bridges instead of one were now upon the Zezere, we were kept in profound ignorance as to his proceedings, and we continued to the last to cast anxious glances towards Abrantes, for the safety of which we conceived that there were still good grounds of apprehension.

I have stated that, on the breaking up of the French army from before the lines of Torres Vedras, General Hill's division was sent across the

Tagus, for the purpose of giving additional security to the garrison of Abrantes, and of embarrassing Massena's movements, should he either attempt to retire by the Alentejo, or take the route of Punhete. As soon as the operations of Soult's army became known, Marshal Beresford's corps was likewise thrown across the river, with a view of raising the siege of Badajoz, and giving relief to the Spanish corps, already hard-pressed upon the frontier. Beresford had not yet begun his march southward, when certain indications of a movement on the part of Massena, induced Lord Wellington to delay his progress. Instead of marching towards Badajoz, he was directed to advance upon Abrantes, and, repassing the Tagus there, to threaten the enemy's posts at Punhete; and a portion of his corps, under Major-general the Honourable William Stewart, had actually obeyed these instructions, when the enemy's designs became suddenly developed. On the night of the 5th of March, Massena decamped from his position at Santarem, and concentrating the whole of his army about Pombal, made demonstrations there, as if he were not only willing, but anxious, to rest the fate of the campaign upon the issue of a general action.

On the 6th of March the head-quarters of the allied army were established at Santarem, and dispositions were made for pursuing the enemy

along the road which his main body had taken, and dislodging him from the several posts which he retained in other quarters. General Stewart's brigade passed the Zezere, and advanced, together with the 4th, the 6th, and part of the 1st divisions, towards Thomar, where the French seemed at first disposed to collect in force; whilst the light division, supported by the 1st German huzzars and royal dragoons, proceeded at a quick pace towards Pombal. At Thomar no encounter took place, the enemy retreating, on the appearance of our people, towards the Mondego; but at Pombal there was some fighting, and hopes were at one moment entertained, that there would be a good deal more. Our leading brigade came up with the fugitives on the 9th, and succeeded, after a brief but smart skirmish, in capturing about two hundred prisoners; and on the 11th dispositions were made for bringing the enemy to action, by the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and light divisions, assembled for the purpose. But Massena, instead of waiting to be assailed, broke up during the night, and fell back, covered by the whole of Montbrun's cavalry, by the 6th corps of infantry, and by part of the 8th, in the direction of Redenha. On the 12th, a strong rear-guard was seen posted at the end of a defile, in front of the village. It was immediately attacked by three divisions of infantry, by General Pack's Portu-

guese brigade, and the cavalry; and after an obstinate resistance, was driven through the defile to the plain beyond. It next retreated to some high and broken ground, where it again showed a front; but from this position also it was compelled to retire with some loss; and finally it withdrew to Condeixa, where the main body had established itself.

The enemy's force assembled here consisted of the 6th, 8th, and 9th corps; of the whole of Mas-sena's army in short, except the 2nd corps, which continued still at Espinhel. The ground which they occupied was singularly commanding; and as it could not be attempted in front, without a sacrifice of lives much greater than either his feelings or policy induced Lord Wellington to risk, arrangements were made for turning it. The third division, under General Picton, made a long and tedious detour to the right; but it succeeded in throwing itself upon the left of the enemy's line, which instantly broke into column of march, and fell back. Similar movements were effected with similar results during several successive days; and the enemy, diverted from his original intention of passing part of his force over the Mondego at Coimbra, continued his retreat, in a single continuous column, along the road which winds between the river and the Sierra de Estrella. The consequence was, that he passed over little

else than a succession of admirable positions ; and as he took care to cover his marches with the best of his cavalry, with a force of infantry which never fell short of ten thousand men, and with only one brigade of guns admirably horsed, his retrogression was conducted in good order, and with as little loss as could well befall an army whilst executing a manœuvre of the kind. On one occasion only were the French in danger of being dragged into a general action, at manifest disadvantage to themselves. Whilst crossing the Coera, the allies pressed so closely upon them, that to save his main body, Massena was content to sacrifice a considerable portion of his rear-guard, which, halting to be attacked, was cut to pieces ; whilst the columns escaped, with the loss of some artillery and a great deal of baggage. It is, however, extremely probable that all Massena's precautions would have failed to preserve him, had it been possible to transport stores and provisions as rapidly as our troops were capable of marching ; but on the 19th, it was found that the columns had outstripped their supplies, and a halt of some days was necessary, to give the latter time to overtake them.

As it was not my good fortune to be an eyewitness of this memorable retreat, having been obliged to leave the army from severe illness for three months, I shall not pretend to enter mi-

nutely into details of which I could speak only upon the reports of others. It is sufficient to observe that Massena finally escaped to a position on the Spanish side of the Agueda, after having exhibited numerous proofs of capacity to direct the movements of a retreating force, and leaving behind him some sad memorials of the absence of all humane feelings from among his soldiery. The line of the enemy's march could, indeed, be everywhere traced by the smoke of cottages, hamlets, and towns, which they reduced to ashes; and even those which escaped the ravages of the flames, were left in a state of total dilapidation and absolute destitution. Of the acts of personal violence which they committed, I would rather not from hearsay give a relation; but this much may be said, that the Portuguese must cease to feel as men commonly feel, if they ever forget the conduct of an army, which entered their country with the warmest protestations of friendship, and in whose promises of protection too many were tempted to place reliance. Even the towns which had given shelter to the head-quarters of the French generals were not spared. Torres Novas, Thomar, and Pernes, were all of them sacked on the evening previous to their evacuation; the convent of Alcobaça was burned to the ground; the Bishop's palace, and the whole town of Leiria, shared the same fate;—in a word, it seemed as if these men

had resolved to make a desert of the country which they had failed to conquer; and that the war, which they professed at first to wage only with the English and their armed partisans, had been turned against its peaceable inhabitants.

The last stand which the enemy made on the present occasion, took place near Sabugal, and proved highly honourable to the British arms. On the 3rd of April, the second corps was seen in position, with its right immediately above the bridge and town of Sabugal; and its left extended along the road to Alfayates, so as to command all the approaches from the fords of the Coa towards the upper part of the town. Lord Wellington made his dispositions to attack it in front, flank, and rear, at the same moment; and but for the unfortunate occurrence of a sudden shower of rain, it would have been, in all probability, annihilated. But though it escaped being surrounded, it made not good its retreat till after it had suffered a severe loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners; and an opportunity had been given to one brigade of the light division, which, single-handed, maintained the unequal contest for some time, of increasing the well-earned reputation which that peculiarly-distinguished division had already acquired. After this, Massena withdrew entirely into Spain; Almeida was blockaded; and Lord Wellington, leaving Sir Brent Spencer to conduct that service,

as well as to provide against emergencies in front, hurried away towards Badajoz, where his presence began about this time to be seriously needed.

It has been stated that Marshal Beresford was already moving to raise the siege of Badajoz, and arrest the progress of Soult in that quarter, when the unexpected concentration of Massena's forces at Pombal, induced Lord Wellington to recall him to his assistance. On the 17th, however, when all hope of fighting a general battle was laid aside, the Marshal prepared to resume his original undertaking; and putting himself at the head of the 2nd and 4th British, and General Hamilton's Portuguese division, with the 13th light dragoons, some heavy cavalry, and two brigades of artillery, he crossed the Tagus at Tancos. Marshal Beresford proceeded by way of Ponte de Lor, Oralo, and Portalegre, to Campo Mayor, where he arrived on the 25th. The enemy had just evacuated the town; and a considerable convoy of artillery, ammunition-waggons, and strings of loaded mules, was seen travelling under the escort of three battalions of infantry, and a regiment of cavalry, towards Badajoz. An immediate pursuit was ordered, and the allied cavalry was not long in overtaking the convoy, which made ready to receive them. General Latour Maubourg, who commanded on the occasion, formed his infantry into two solid squares, which he supported by placing his cavalry on the

right ; but a brilliant charge from two squadrons of the 13th, in which a similar force of Portuguese took part, overthrew the French cavalry, and gave to the allies momentary possession of the entire convoy. The ardour of pursuit, however, carried the conquerors too far. They followed the flying cavalry under the guns of Badajoz, and suffered, in consequence, some loss ; whilst they gave to the squares an opportunity of retiring in good order, against which they could not, in their scattered state, make any impression. The consequence was, that before any portion of the British infantry was enabled to come up, the whole of the convoy escaped within the gates, leaving only a single howitzer, with one or two ammunition-waggons, in the hands of our dragoons.

The enemy having thus withdrawn entirely from the right bank of the Guadiana, it became an object of consideration how that river was to be passed, in order that Badajoz might be put in a state of blockade before it should be provisioned, or the damage caused in the late siege repaired. There were but two bridges, one at Merida, the other at Badajoz ; and both were in possession of the French ; whilst the only practicable ford,—and that too, during the present season of the year, practicable for cavalry alone,—lay under the guns of Fort Juramenha. Upon it, however, no reliance could be placed, as the sole channel of