

with a probability of success. Of Barba del Puerco in particular, it behoved him, in the opinion of all, to be excessively jealous, because, through it ran the most direct and shortest road towards the enemy's outposts; indeed, so conscious were all parties of this, that on the 11th the 4th regiment, from Sir William Erskine's division, was, in spite of the late agreement, ordered up to take possession of the heights above that place. But the arrangement came too late, for matters were already in a train for an attempt, the success of which, whilst it speaks nothing in favour of our prudence, must ever redound to the honour of General Brennier, the brave man who conducted it.

A little before midnight on the 11th, an immense explosion was heard in the vicinity of the fortress; though our head-quarters were too far removed to be aware of the circumstance. Soon afterwards General Pack, who chanced to be at Malparteda with the pickets of his brigade, spread an alarm that the place was blown up, and that the French garrison was marching in good order towards Barba del Puerco. General Pack's pickets offered as much resistance as they were capable of offering; but the enemy soon broke through, and passing along the flank of the reserve, our people were unable to arrest their progress, even for a moment. General Pack sent immediately to summon General Campbell, who, on the first noise,

had hurried from his quarters ; but the latter hastened to the front, not leaving, as it was said, positive orders behind him, and came up whilst his own troops were yet dispersed and in disorder. Great delay occurred in consequence, in bringing them to the point threatened ; whilst the 4th regiment failed in its attempts to head the flying garrison ; by which means Brennier was enabled to lead his troops in a close and compact column from Almeida as far as the Agueda, without having experienced any serious molestation by the way. General Pack, indeed, by great exertions, contrived to hang with a few of his men upon the enemy's rear, and pointed out, by the flashes of his musketry, the exact path which they had taken ; but Brennier conducted all things in a manner so cool and soldier-like, that not the slightest symptom of confusion was manifested throughout the night. He had given positive directions to his soldiers, from the instant of their quitting the town, to continue their march in profound silence ; however heavy might be the fire of the besiegers, they were not to return a shot ; and when daylight arrived, in case they should find themselves surrounded, they were to make an opening wherever they best could, with the bayonet. No commands could have been more punctually obeyed. The sound of a voice was not heard among them ; and they never once returned the desultory tirailade

with which General Pack's men endeavoured to gall them.

Having reached the Agueda, they made a halt, in order that some stragglers who had lagged behind, might regain the column. This measure afforded an opportunity to the 36th, 2nd, and 4th regiments, to close upon them; and as the French, when they resumed their march, mistook their way by diverging a little too much to the left, these regiments were enabled to reach the bank of the river just as the fugitives were crossing the bridge at Barba del Puerco. A destructive fire was immediately thrown in, by which between one and two hundred men were mowed down; whilst two squadrons of the royals having flanked them, succeeded, in conjunction with Pack's Portuguese, in securing ten officers and two hundred men as prisoners. Thus about one-third of the garrison of Almeida was cut off. But the remaining two-thirds effected their escape, not less, in all probability, to the astonishment of Marshal Massena, than to the regret of Lord Wellington and his followers. It seemed as if, by this untoward event, all the advantages obtained by the battle of Fuentes de Honor were thrown away. Not that we very deeply regretted the escape of the individuals: they were brave men, had made a bold venture, and deserved that it should be crowned with success; but it was mortifying to

reflect that now Massena might, with some show of reason, speak of his late operations as a victory, and not as a defeat. He might, in a specious manner, inform Europe that he had manœuvred merely for the purpose of bringing off the garrison of Almeida; and as the garrison had actually escaped, how could we contradict him? It is not worth while to dwell longer on this affair; but I will venture to affirm that no one who witnessed the effect this disappointment produced upon our army, will ever be able to forget it.

General Brennier left Almeida in a state of sad dilapidation. On examining it next day, we found that three out of the five bastions of which it was composed, had been blown to atoms; the crests were thrown down into the ditch; and the stones of which they had principally been composed, were hurled, by the violence of the explosion, in all directions, and to great distances. Whether the foundations were materially shaken, we had not the means of immediately ascertaining; but the revetments and ravelines were equally untouched, and the main outline of the rampart and ditch remained entire. The other two bastions had not been injured, the mines having by mere accident failed to explode. Yet was the whole a complete ruin; and though we judged that it might be so far restored, for a moderate expense, as to be rendered secure against a coup-de-main, we saw

plainly enough, that to put it again in a state of defence, and render it capable of withstanding a siege, would require much time, much labour, and much money. In this country the expenses of mason work are very heavy, and Almeida was entirely constructed of masonry; whilst the lapse of six or eight months—the smallest space of time that its re-erection would require—would, in all probability, produce events calculated, either in one way or another, to render its existence or non-existence a question of very little importance. On these accounts, Lord Wellington determined not to interfere respecting it, but to leave it to the Portuguese government to determine whether it should be rebuilt or not; and if it were, in what form, and after what plan, the repairs should be applied.

The sensation produced by the escape of the garrison, and the destruction of Almeida, having subsided, we began again to give our undivided attention to the reports which arrived from various quarters, relative to the French, as well as to speculations and surmises touching ourselves. Of the French, it was confidently asserted that they had retired upon Salamanca, Zamora, and Toro; that Massena had received his recall from Paris; and that Marmont, of whose junction we had previously received accounts, was now in the chief command. Their generals, moreover, were said

to agree in opinion that nothing could be undertaken against Portugal or the English, till the army should be completely reorganised, and strengthened by large supplies both of men and means. All likewise combined, it was said, in an outcry against Massena, whose conduct towards Ney had been warmly condemned, not only by the corps of Ney himself, but by the officers of the army in general, and whose measures were characterised as having been, from the first, without object, and destitute of judgment. A strong sense of discontent was thus said to be general throughout their ranks, and discipline was stated to have become, in consequence, grievously relaxed. As to ourselves, though our credit might not, perhaps, stand on ground quite so elevated as that which it occupied previous to the late failure at Almeida, yet it must be admitted by all that the British army had established for itself a reputation such as it had not, at any other period of the war, obtained; and there were few who looked forward without a sanguine and well-grounded expectation, that future events would only add to the glories of the troops and their illustrious leader. We had now been fairly pitted against the warriors and chiefs before whom the powers of Europe gave way; and we had come forth from the struggle in a manner which could hardly fail to satisfy all that we were at least not

inferior to them in any qualification befitting soldiers. Every individual in the army felt this, and every one felt to whom the praise was due. The consequence was, that Lord Wellington was looked up to with a degree of enthusiastic devotion, which it may not, perhaps, be easy for a common reader to understand; whilst all his proceedings showed that in his army, in its valour and patience, discipline and coolness, he reposed a confidence of which the soldiers knew themselves to be worthy, and which it was their principal boast, that they had in no instance abused or betrayed.

As soon as Almeida fell, and it became satisfactorily ascertained that nothing of any importance would be attempted on this side of Portugal, Lord Wellington began to direct a large share of his attention to the campaign in the south, and made ready to assist Marshal Beresford, not only with strong reinforcements, but with his own counsel and presence. For this purpose, he put two divisions, the 3rd and the 7th, under Generals Picton and Houston, in march towards the Guadiana, directing them to move by Campo Mayor. The rest of the army was then ordered into cantonments; the sixth division at Mealhada, Jueda, and Frenada; the fifth at Fuentes de Honor, Ponte Vilhe, and Nave d'Avel; the first at Aldea de Ponte and Albergaria; the light at Gallegos, and along the banks of the Agueda; and the ca-

valry at Cesmeo and the villages near. Along this line, by the extraordinary exertions of Mr. Kennedy and the commissariat department, the troops were, upon the whole, well supplied; and though forage was rather scarce, still the cavalry contrived not only to keep up the condition in which they previously stood, but even to improve upon it. Sir Brent Spencer, likewise, on whom, in the event of Lord Wellington's absence, the command of the whole devolved, was unremitting in his exertions to provide for the wants of the soldiers, and to guard them against surprise. But on the latter head no great risk was apprehended; and therefore Lord Wellington, as soon as he had seen his arrangements in a train towards their completion, set off, accompanied by the heads of departments, for Badajoz.

It may be necessary here to advert to circumstances which, during the last fortnight, had befallen Marshal Beresford and his corps.

On the 22nd of April, in consequence of directions given by Lord Wellington himself, measures were taken for completing the investment of Badajoz, and for preparing fascines, gabions, and other implements necessary for the conduct of the siege. These were somewhat interrupted by the sudden rise of the river on the 24th; which sweeping away the bridge of casks, which had been thrown across, cut off all communication between



the investing army and Portugal. On the 29th, however, the communications were restored by means of flying bridges; and on the 1st of May, the bridge of casks was replaced more firmly and more conveniently than ever.

On the 4th, General William Stewart invested Badajoz on the left bank of the river; having marched from Talavera la Real with five thousand men at midnight, and taken up his ground without any loss at nine in the morning. By some mistake, however, and the occurrence of several disasters, the investment on the southern side was not effected till the 8th, and then only after a good deal of skirmishing, and with considerable difficulty. But a flying bridge was, in the interim, established on the Guadiana, immediately below the mouth of the Caya; roads of communication were formed round the place; and the guns and stores were moved from Olivença according to orders; and as those intended to act against Fort St. Christoval were brought up on the same day which saw the investment completed, preparations were made to break ground, and commence the siege with vigour, that evening.

Without going into a regular journal of this siege, it may be proper to advert here to the amount of the means with which a handful of British troops endeavoured to reduce one of the strongest and most regularly fortified places in

the south of Spain. For the attack upon Fort Christoval—to the results of which they looked for success in the undertaking at large—there were provided five hundred intrenching tools, two thousand sand-bags, a few planks, and about two hundred gabions. The artillery consisted of three brass twenty-four pounders, provided with three hundred rounds per gun, and two eight-inch howitzers, supplied each with two hundred rounds. The besieging corps was made up of one British brigade, two battalions of Portuguese of the line, and a battalion of militia, mustering in all about four thousand men; one hundred men of the line were appointed to act as overseers; forty-eight carpenters, and thirty-six miners, were attached to the engineers; and there were present twenty-seven rank and file of the corps of royal military artificers.<sup>1</sup>

The soil upon which the working parties began their operations proved so rocky and unyielding, that though ground was broken on the night of the 8th, and four hundred men were employed in breaking it, ten men only were enabled to work under cover, when daylight appeared; and the progress made was in consequence both slow and

<sup>1</sup> See an extremely interesting work by Colonel Jones, of the Engineers, called "A Journal of the Sieges in the Peninsula."

unsatisfactory. On the 10th the garrison made a sortie, which was at first attended with success—the troops employed making their way, in spite of the covering parties, into one of our advanced works; but the guard of the trenches soon recovered the ground which was lost, and drove the enemy back with considerable slaughter within the walls. On this occasion the indiscreet valour of some of our officers tempted them to lead their men up to the very glacis of the fort; and they sustained, for no purpose, a loss, which might have been well avoided, of nearly four hundred in killed and wounded. On the 11th the breaching battery being completed, and the guns and howitzers prepared for service, our artillery opened the attack, attempting, with the howitzers, to keep under the fire of the place; whilst with the three twenty-four pounders, they strove to batter in breach the smaller flank of Fort St. Christoval. But our gunners were Portuguese recruits, who knew little of their duty, and exhibited a bad specimen of practice; whereas the fire from the fort was both well directed and warmly kept up. The consequence was, that long before evening our batteries were silenced; and the three guns, and one of the howitzers, were rendered unserviceable.

Nothing intimidated by these reverses, Marshal

Beresford prepared to renew his efforts with all the means which he was able to bring together. Other guns were moved round to Fort Christoval, and a new battery constructed and armed ; but before a fair trial could be made of its efficiency, reports reached the General, which caused him to suspend, for the present, the whole of his undertaking. He learned that Soult, having collected an army of fifteen or sixteen thousand men, in communication with General Latour Maubourg at the head of six thousand more, was in full march for the relief of the place ; and as the corps with which he covered the siege was by no means competent to oppose that force, it became indispensable to relinquish every other object, for the sake of effectually meeting the danger which threatened. On the night between the 12th and 13th, therefore, when a fresh parallel had just been opened, and upwards of fourteen hundred men were paraded, for the purpose of briskly carrying on the work, an order arrived that the undertaking should be relinquished, and that the troops should march, without delay, to the position at Valverde. The orders were promptly obeyed. On the night of the 13th, all the batteries were dismounted ; and on the 14th, such materials as it was found impossible to remove, were burned, or otherwise destroyed. On the night of the 15th, the last corps which had halted to complete these

operations, took their departure; and the first siege of Badajoz was formally raised.

Such was the substance of the information which reached us; part of it whilst we were yet at Villa Formosa, and part whilst we were prosecuting our journey towards the Guadiana. That Marshal Beresford's situation was one of extreme difficulty and delicacy, any one who reflects must perceive. There was submitted to him no other alternative than either to fight with the Guadiana in his rear, over which his communications were precarious and indifferent, or by a retreat, to abandon Badajoz entirely, and permit the enemy, by taking possession of the course of the river, to strengthen and consolidate himself in Estremadura and the south of Spain. He knew, indeed, that Lord Wellington was hurrying to his assistance, and he was aware that two divisions had begun their march for the purpose of supporting him: had it been practicable, therefore, to protract matters, and to avoid an action till the reinforcements should arrive, it would have been his policy to do so. But the enemy pressed forward with so much rapidity, and manifested so decided an intention of overwhelming him at once, that in point of fact he can hardly be said to have possessed a choice. He accordingly concentrated his troops, as has been above related, at Valverde, whither likewise the Spanish generals, Blake and Castaños, with

twelve thousand men, hastened to join him; and the three chiefs having concerted their plans, and made every disposition to receive the enemy, awaited that battle which appeared to be inevitable.

## CHAPTER V.

Journey of Lord Wellington towards Badajoz—Battle of Al-Buhera—Retreat of Soult, and renewal of the siege—It is pressed with vigour, and a breach in Fort St. Christoval pronounced practicable—Movements of the enemy to relieve the place—Brilliant cavalry affair at Fregate.

In consequence of the advice which he received from the south, Lord Wellington, as soon as he saw matters in a proper train upon the Agueda, set off to join Marshal Borsford, and to superintend in person the operations which that officer was conducting. We quitted Villa Fernand on the 15th, and travelling at the rate of sixty miles a day, without baggage or impediments of any description, arrived in Elvas before dark on the 10th. Whilst performing this arduous journey, a variety of rumours relative to late transactions met us at every stage. At one place it was stated that the enemy were coming on in force, and that

## CHAPTER V.

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IN consequence of the advices which he received from the south, Lord Wellington, as soon as he saw matters in a proper train upon the Agueda, set off to join Marshal Beresford, and to superintend in person the operations which that officer was conducting. We quitted Villa Formosa on the 15th, and travelling at the rate of sixty miles a day, without baggage or impediments of any description, arrived in Elvas before dark on the 19th. Whilst performing this arduous journey, a variety of rumours relative to late transactions met us at every stage. At one place it was stated that the enemy were coming on in force, and that

a battle might hourly be expected ; at another, that Marshal Beresford had resolved upon a retreat, not feeling himself equal to oppose the French ; and, at a third, that a great action had been fought, and that it had ended in favour of the allies. It will readily be imagined that the last rumour, though it entered in no respect into particulars, tended, in no slight degree, to elevate our spirits, and quicken our pace. On reaching Elvas, however, more accurate details were given ; for Colonel Arbuthnot, from the Marshal's headquarters, met us here, and from him we received an official account of one of the most obstinate, as well as sanguinary actions, in which British troops were ever engaged.

The most advantageous position which it is possible for an army to assume, which desires to check the advance of a hostile force from Seville to Badajoz, is beside the village of Albuera, among some undulating heights which stretch towards the rear, and are covered by two small streams running in parallel directions upon the flanks of the plateau. On this ground Marshal Beresford determined to take post, and for that purpose advanced his troops towards Albuera on the 14th and 15th ; but Soult, having hurried from Seville by forced marches of not less than six leagues a day, was beforehand with him ; and the cavalry, which had been sent on as far as Almendralejo to



reconnoitre, was driven back in disorder. It was accordingly found, on arriving at the village, that an extensive wood, of which it had been Marshal Beresford's intention to avail himself, was in possession of the French; and hence, that whatever dispositions he might deem it advisable to make, must be entirely restricted to the country on the western bank of the Albuera.

The position selected for the army was accordingly behind the little river Albuera, where the road from Seville to Badajoz and Olivença, after passing the stream by a bridge close to the village, separates into two branches. Here the ground rises from the river in gentle undulations, which, extending to the right, afford no single point d'appui more favourable than another, but tempt him, who has already arranged his line along their summits, to draw it out from hill to hill, and eminence to eminence. It was here that the allied armies were posted on the evening of the 15th; their left resting upon Albuera, and covered by the stream, the steep banks of which, together with some walls and buildings, afforded to it a good deal of shelter; whilst their right, extending to a considerable distance, found no commanding feature on which to lean.

Marshal Beresford had on this occasion under his orders a corps of Spaniards, whom he stationed in a double line upon his extreme right, between

two hillocks, one somewhat in advance of the other; next to them came the second British division, which, under General Stewart, composed the centre; and on the left of all were the Portuguese of General Hamilton's division, supported by General Alten's brigade of light Germans. The fourth division, under General Cole, which did not reach its ground till after the battle began, formed, as a reserve, in rear of the second; whilst the main body of the cavalry took post upon the right, so as to cover the Spaniards, and hinder them from being turned. With respect to the exact numbers of this army, it is not very easy to form a correct judgment, because the Spaniards are proverbial for the great inaccuracy of their returns; but taking these at 12,000, the Portuguese at 8000, and the British at 7500, the total amount will reach about 27,000. That it could not exceed this is certain, however much it might fall short of it. In cavalry, Marshal Beresford's corps was extremely weak, and his artillery amounted to no more than thirty pieces.

The force with which Soult prepared to raise the siege of Badajoz was, in point of number, inferior to that of the allies; but in cavalry, artillery, and the general character of the troops, it was greatly superior. Twenty thousand French infantry, three thousand cavalry, and forty pieces of cannon, bivouacked, on the night of the 15th, in

the wood; and the whole advanced next day in the finest order to the attack.

It might be about nine o'clock in the morning of the 16th, when a heavy force of cavalry, supported by two large columns of infantry, were seen moving towards the bridge, with a view, as it was supposed, of piercing the allied line in that quarter, and making themselves masters of Albuera. All eyes were instantly turned to the point threatened, and the most effective preparations were made to meet and repel the attack; but before the excellence of these could in any degree be put to the test, a new source of alarm disclosed itself in another direction. The enemy, instead of coming on as had been expected, rapidly changed their plan, and under cover of their cavalry, and favoured by a thick fog, filed off towards our right. Here they pressed forward with an impetuosity which the Spaniards, who were stationed there, could not withstand; and in a few minutes they were in possession of the most commanding heights, upon which our right flank depended for support. The Spaniards behaved, on this occasion, with considerable gallantry. They gave way, it is true, and fell back; but their retreat was conducted without confusion, and though repulsed, they were far from being defeated. But their retrogression threw open to the enemy, not only the key of Marshal

Beresford's position, but the only good road by which, in case of a disaster, he could retire ; for it laid bare his line of communication with Valverde, and exposed him to the risk of being hemmed in between the river and the enemy's columns. It became, therefore, an object of the first importance to recover the heights which had been lost ; and it was in striving to attain that end, that the chief portion of the loss occurred.

Marshal Beresford endeavoured at first to bring back the Spanish troops to the charge ; but finding them extremely unwieldy, and little capable of executing a nice manœuvre, he passed the whole of General Stewart's division through them, towards the right. This done, General Stewart immediately deployed his first brigade, consisting of the buffs, the 66th, the 2nd battalion 48th, and the 31st, into line, and pushed them, under Colonel Colbourn, up the hill, against the enemy's columns. Their advance was spirited, and their fire admirably directed ; but before they could approach within charging distance, the enemy's cavalry broke in upon their right. One wing of the buffs was now directed to be thrown back ; but the regiment, confused, in part by the approach of the cavalry, and not rightly understanding the orders given, fell in upon the second brigade, which, under General Houghton, was advancing in column to support its comrades. The

movement unavoidably threw that brigade likewise into confusion, as it happened at the moment to be in the act of deploying into line; and hence it could afford no adequate assistance, for some time, to the leading regiments, which were now engaged under the most fearful disadvantages. The consequence was, that the first brigade suffered terribly, as well by a tremendous fire of grape which was poured upon them from the height, as from the cavalry which rode through and cut them up at their leisure. The buffs, 66th, and 48th, were, indeed, annihilated, and the 31st escaped a similar fate, only because, being on the left, it had time to form, and was thus enabled to show a regular front to the enemy.

In the mean while General Houghton's brigade had completed its formation, and advanced gallantly to the charge, the General himself animating his troops forward, and setting them an example of the most devoted bravery. He was thus employed, cheering them on, and waving his hat in front of the line, when three balls pierced his body, and he fell. The brigade, however, was not daunted by his fall; it still pressed forward, and the regiments of which it was composed, namely the 57th, 1st battalion 48th, and 29th, vied with one another in deeds of heroism. The 57th and 29th in particular, the former under Colonel Inglis, the latter under Major Way, performed pro-

digies of valour ; but notwithstanding their utmost exertions, nobly seconded by those of the 28th, 34th, and 39th, under Colonel Abercrombie, the enemy succeeded in maintaining their post. At this moment we had lost a whole brigade of artillery, a large number of prisoners, and eight stand of colours, belonging to the buffs, the 66th, the 48th, and 57th regiments ; and affairs began to wear an unpromising appearance. But Marshal Beresford determined to make one effort more for victory, and happily it was not made in vain.

General Cole's division had not yet been engaged ; it reached the ground after the battle began ; and having rested for a space in rear of the centre, was moved towards the right, where it formed en potence. It was now ordered down into the valley, for the purpose of carrying this formidable height. Nothing could exceed the gallantry of the fusileer brigade, to which the arduous task was mainly intrusted. Though deprived, at an early stage of the action, of their leader, Sir William Myers, the fusileers pressed on without a moment's pause, or even hesitation, and, amidst terrible slaughter, drove the enemy from the ridge which he had so long and so obstinately defended. They were, however, ably seconded by Colonel Abercrombie's brigade, as well as by a brigade of Portuguese under Colonel Hervey, which repeatedly resisted and repelled attacks

from the enemy's cavalry; and they retook the whole of the captured guns, with the exception of a single howitzer, and three out of the eight stand of colours which had been lost. In this grand assault General Cole, with almost every individual attached to his staff, was wounded; General Stewart received two contusions; and few of the senior officers, either of regiments or brigades, escaped unhurt; but its success was decisive of the fortune of the day, which now declared in our favour. The enemy made no fresh efforts to regain his post, but retiring in good order across the rivulet, took up for the night the ground from which he had advanced in the morning.

Whilst this tremendous conflict was going on upon the right, several attempts were made to penetrate into the village, and to break through our left in the direction of the bridge. The latter were bravely met by the Portuguese troops, who constantly drove back the columns as fast as they came on; whilst General Alten's light Germans, lining the walls about the village, hindered the assailants from making any impression there. Some cavalry, which showed themselves here, were watched by the 13th light dragons, and by a Portuguese brigade, under Colonel Otway; but the mass of the enemy's horse, independently of those squadrons which committed so much havoc among the infantry, was extended beyond our right, and

threatened to take us in rear. It was judiciously opposed by General Lumley's heavy brigade, which, moving as the enemy moved, and continually presenting to them a front of resistance, hindered them from effecting a design which must have been productive to us of the most serious consequences. Our artillery, likewise, was admirably served: its fire was very destructive, and the men stood to their guns till many of them were sabred; indeed, there was not an officer or soldier in any department of the army who failed this day in doing more than his duty. I have already spoken of the daring intrepidity of the fusileers, and it deserves to be held up to remembrance; but the bravery of the 57th and 31st fell in no degree short of that of their comrades. These regiments having ascended the height, stood their ground nobly against all the efforts of a column of French grenadiers. The enemy's fire thinned their ranks, but never once broke them; for at the close of the action, the dead and wounded were found in two distinct lines, upon the very spots which they had occupied whilst alive and fighting. They fought, too, in every imaginable order which infantry can be called upon to assume. They resisted cavalry in square, deployed again into line, received and returned repeated volleys, whilst a few yards only divided them from their opponents; and at last carried everything before them,



by a charge with the bayonet. All this could not, of course, be done without a prodigious slaughter on both sides; indeed, the killed and wounded lay in masses so compact, that full seven thousand bodies occupied the space of a few hundred feet; and our artillery, when advancing towards the close of the day, were compelled to pass over them, deaf to their cries, and averting their gaze from the brave fellows thus laid prostrate in the dust.

The victory was a highly important one, but it was purchased at a rate dearer than had been required to secure any other victory in the Peninsula. Out of 7500 British troops engaged, 4158 were placed hors de combat, the Portuguese lost 389, and the Spaniards nearly 2000; so that there fell of the allies this day no fewer than 6577. Of the enemy's loss we were necessarily unable to form a calculation equally exact, but it was estimated to amount to full 8000, among whom were three generals killed, and many superior officers wounded. The latter fact we learned from our prisoners, who asserted that the casualties among their leaders had been such as to leave the troops in many instances at a loss from whom to receive orders, and that this circumstance, more than any other, led to the retreat from the height, and the abandonment of further operations.

During the battle of Albuera, a number of little

events occurred, some of them honourable in the highest degree to individuals, and others, not disgraceful, but somewhat ludicrous. It is not necessary for me to add my tribute of respect to the memory of the brave youth, Ensign Thomas, of the Buffs, who refused to resign the standard of his regiment except with life, and whose life paid the forfeit of his devoted gallantry. Though young in years, and holding but an inferior rank in his profession, his name will be recorded in the list of those of whom England has just cause to be proud; and his example will doubtless be followed by others, as often as the chances of war may leave them only a choice between death and dishonour. But there were one or two circumstances besides this, of which little notice has elsewhere been taken, and which appear to me to be deserving of some passing record.

During the hottest of the action, Marshal Beresford exposed himself with a degree of intrepidity, which could hardly fail of spreading an example of heroism around. He repeatedly dragged the Spanish officers from their ranks, compelling them to lead their men forward, and show them the way; and when individually charged by a Polish lancer, he grappled his adversary by the throat, and threw him from his saddle. A very different fate attended the personal exertions of the Portuguese staff. They too were charged by a single

lancer, who knocked down one with the butt of his pike, overset another man and horse, and gave ample employment to the entire head-quarters before he was finally despatched. These heroes declared that the man seemed possessed by an evil spirit; and that when he fell at last, he literally bit the ground. The lancers, as is well known, were peculiarly daring in their attacks, and merciless in their operations. They seldom paused to offer quarter, but speared our men without mercy, whether offering resistance, or giving proofs of submission.

Such is the substance of an official report, which was communicated to us at Elvas on the 19th; and it must be confessed that a disclosure of the loss sustained took away, in some degree, from the satisfaction which would have otherwise accompanied the announcement of a fresh victory. When the amount of casualties suffered at Albuera came to be added to those experienced before Badajoz, and in the affair of Fuentes de Honor, it appeared that, unless powerful reinforcements should arrive speedily from England, the plans for the rest of the campaign must receive serious interruption from the absence of adequate means to carry them into effect. We had it in contemplation, be it remembered, at this time to reduce the two fortresses of Badajoz and Rodrigo, and to keep the army of Portugal occupied in the north; whilst

Soult should be threatened in the south, and an effort made to raise the blockade of Cadiz; and to effect these different ends, we possessed only the force which had followed Massena from Torres Vedras, diminished by full nine thousand men, who were hors de combat in the late encounters. It was impossible to think of this without experiencing the liveliest anxiety, or to cast our regards homewards without an ardent hope that a proper spirit might animate the councils of those in whom the power of rightly carrying on the war was vested. That we were committed in the eyes, not of the Peninsular nations only, but of Europe at large, could no longer be questioned; all now looked to us and to our fortunes as the criterion by which to try the wisdom of their own resistance or continued submission to the French yoke; and hence, if we should either relinquish the contest, or conduct it with languor and indifference, the prospect of a secure peace was felt to be as remote, as when arms were first assumed against the aggressions of Buonaparte. It was our business, however, not to speculate upon probabilities, or to waste time in idly wishing for an increase of means, but to turn those already at our disposal to the best account; and Lord Wellington was not a man to permit present opportunities to be neglected, merely because the future happened to be not quite so bright as he either desired,