

CHAP.VII. south of Estramadura, tended perhaps still further to increase his security, by inducing the belief that Lord Wellington had detached a large portion of his army to the Alentejo. Under this impression, he not only quartered his army in very extensive cantonments, but even ventured to detach General Montbrun, with three divisions, to assist Suchet in his operations in Valencia. The division of General Bonnet had likewise been detached, by Dorsenne, to occupy the Asturias; and another, under General Dubreton, was scouring the province of Las Montanas.

Lord Wellington, accurately informed of these details, determined instantly to commence the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. Accordingly, on the sixth of January, head-quarters were transferred from Frenada to Gallegos; but the ground being covered with snow, and the weather inclement, the army did not move till the eighth. The light division alone crossed the Agueda, and formed the investment; but the other divisions took part in all the duties of the siege, and were prepared, if necessary, to move to the support of the investing force.

Jan. 8. Shortly after dark, on the same evening, par-

ties from the third, fourth, and light divisions CHAP.VII.
 broke ground before the fortress, under a heavy
 fire; and a redoubt, situated on the great Tes-
 son, was gallantly stormed by a party of the light
 division, under Lieutenant-Colonel Colburne.—
 The immediate direction of the siege was en-
 trusted to Sir Thomas Graham, who had suc-
 ceeded Sir Brent Spencer as second in command.

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By the capture of the redoubt, a powerful pre-
 liminary obstacle to the operations of the besieg-
 ers was removed. On the night following, the
 first parallel was established, and the batteries
 traced out. On the night of the thirteenth, a
 fortified Convent, situated on the right of the
 captured redoubt, was attacked and carried by
 a detachment of light infantry companies, sup-
 ported by Lord Blantyre's brigade. The as-
 sailants succeeded in approaching the Convent
 unobserved; and, effecting an entrance, took
 the garrison by surprise. As this post was of
 considerable importance, a lodgment was form-
 ed in it, and the sap was carried on to the line
 of the second parallel.

Jan. 13.

On the fourteenth, the garrison took advan-
 tage of a moment when the trenches were un-
 guarded, to make a sortie. By a culpable neg-

Jan. 14.

CHAP. VII. ligence, the guard, quitting the trenches, were
1812. accustomed to depart on observing the approach
January. of the relief. For a moment, therefore, the
enemy were successful; the workmen, armed
only with spade and mattock, hastily retired;
but the alarm was instantly given, and the as-
sailants were driven back, without effecting
more injury than that of upsetting a few ga-
bions into the sap.

In the meanwhile, intelligence was received that Marmont, ignorant of the operations of the allies, was approaching, with the view of throwing supplies into the place. But as this ignorance could be but of short duration, Lord Wellington determined to push forward his advances with the utmost rapidity, in the hope of carrying the town, before Marmont and Dorsenne should be enabled to collect their forces for its relief. In case, however, he should be defeated in this object, preparations were made for encountering the combined army in the field. The divisions, in the more distant cantonments, were moved up to the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo; and General Hill was directed to throw two brigades across the Tagus, to move as occasion might require.

It was considered of importance to gain possession of the convent of St. Francisco, by which the approaches were enfiladed on the left. Batteries were accordingly erected against it, which speedily destroyed the defences; and, on the night of the fourteenth, it was carried by assault. The second parallel was then completed, and progress made by sap towards the crest of the glacis. Advances were likewise made from the left of the first parallel down the slope of the hill, and fresh batteries established, from which an incessant fire was kept up on the *fausse braie*, and body of the place.

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January.

Jan. 14.

On the nineteenth, two practicable breaches were completed, one in the *fausse braie*, the other in the main wall, and preparations immediately made for storming them, though the sap had not been brought to the crest of the glacis, and the counterscarp of the ditch was still entire.

Jan. 19.

The attack of the main breach was committed to the division of General Picton, consisting of the brigades of Major-General Mackinnon, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell. The column was to be preceded by a storming-party, consisting of the light companies of the division under Ma-

CHAP.VII. jor Manners of the seventy-fourth; and, to divert the attention of the garrison, a demonstration was to be made on the right by Lieutenant-Colonel O'Toole, with five companies of the ninety-fifth rifle corps, and the light companies of the eighty-third and ninety-fourth.

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The light division, consisting of the brigades of Major-General Vandeleur and Colonel Barnard, was directed to assault the smaller breach, headed by a storming party of three hundred men, led by Major Napier of the fifty-second regiment.

General Pack was instructed to make a false attack with his brigade on the outwork of St. Iago, and the convent of La Caridada, with instructions to convert it into a real one, should circumstances prove favourable.

Jan. 19. Soon after dark, on the nineteenth, the troops were under arms, and at seven o'clock advanced to the assault. In order to facilitate the advance of the main storming party, under General Mackinnon, and remove such impediments as the enemy might oppose to their ascent of the main breach, Colonel Campbell, with the ninety-fourth regiment, and second battalion of the fifth, which had been placed as near as possible to the

town, descended the counterscarp, by means of ropes, and moved silently to the breach, which they succeeded in reaching without discovery. Not meeting with any serious obstacle to retard their progress, and aware of the danger of delay at such a crisis, Colonel Campbell, on his own responsibility, formed the daring resolution of storming the town, though such an attempt was not warranted by his orders. At this moment he could only avail himself of the battalion of the fifth, and the right wing of the ninety-fourth, but placing himself at their head, he instantly commenced ascending the breach.

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The enemy were now on the alert; and Colonel Campbell had nearly reached the summit of the breach, when he distinctly heard the enemy's artillery men receive orders to fire. With great promptitude he instantly ordered the men to throw themselves flat on their faces. No sooner had this been done than a shower of shot and shells swept over them; and the troops, springing to their feet, again poured onward, and in a few moments the breach was cleared.

In endeavouring to reach the ramparts on the right, an unexpected obstacle occurred. The enemy had cut a wide ditch between the breach

CHAP.VII. and the ramparts ; but here one of those fortunate incidents occurred, on which the most important events frequently depend. Across the ditch two planks had been placed by the enemy, and in the confusion of their retreat, they had removed one of them, but neglected the other. Along this temporary bridge the troops passed to the ramparts on the right, driving the artillery men from the guns, and carrying every thing before them.

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January.

New difficulties, however, soon presented themselves. The storming party, under General Mackinnon, had not yet appeared ; and the garrison, recovering from their panic, made a powerful attack on their assailants. Under these circumstances Colonel Campbell ordered a volley, and then charging at the head of his detachment, the French immediately fled, throwing down their arms. Such had been the celerity of Colonel Campbell's movements, that when on the ramparts, his men were fired at by the light troops from without the town, who were ignorant of its having been already stormed.*

* That the fifth and ninety-fourth regiments had entered by the breach before General Mackinnon's brigade came up, is not gen-

It was at this period that the column of Gen-
 eral Mackinnon commenced its attack. It was
 received by a shower of grape and musquetry,
 which did great execution ; but the troops
 pressing onwards, succeeded in clearing the
 breach. Unfortunately an expense magazine,
 on the rampart, accidentally caught fire, and
 General Mackinnon and many of his followers
 were killed by the explosion. Notwithstanding
 this misfortune, and a destructive fire kept up by
 the garrison from behind an interior retrench-
 ment, the assailants maintained their ground,
 till the troops which had already entered came
 to their assistance, when the enemy gave way.

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January.

In the meanwhile, General Vandeleur's brig-
 ade of the light division, which had formed be-
 hind the convent in the suburb, nearly opposite
 to the lesser breach, advanced at the appointed
 moment to the assault. General Crawford—
 than whom the service boasted no more zealous
 and accomplished officer—received his death
 wound on the glacis while leading on his divi-
 sion ; and General Vandeleur, Colonel Col-

erally known. The fact is in perfect accordance with the ac-
 count given in the despatch of Lord Wellington, though not
 with the minuter details of Lord Londonderry or Colonel Jones.

CHAP. VII. burne, and Major George Napier, who led
the storming party, were likewise wounded.
1812. The courage of the soldiers, however, was not
January. daunted. Notwithstanding the tremendous fire
by which they were assailed, the column continued its advance. The breach was carried in spite of every obstacle ; and the troops having hastily formed, swept round the ramparts to the larger breach.

The column of General Pack had likewise been successful in their escalade, and the town was carried at all points. The garrison fled in confusion, throwing away their arms, and the whole of the survivors were made prisoners.

This successful achievement was followed by the usual scenes of riot and excess. The men, no longer amenable to discipline, ransacked the houses in search of plunder. The cellars were broken open and emptied of their contents ; many houses were wantonly set on fire ; and the yells of brutal triumph uttered by the intoxicated soldiers, were heard in wild dissonance with the screams of the wounded. Thus passed the night. In the morning, by the exertions of the officers, discipline was partially restored. The soldiers by degrees returned to their duty, and

SKETCH

of the

Siege of

CIUDAD RODRIGO

1812

AGUEDA RIV.

SUBURB SAN MARINA

SUBURB ST FRANCIS

Convict of St Francisco carried on ship 14th

Vanguard advanced to attack the house

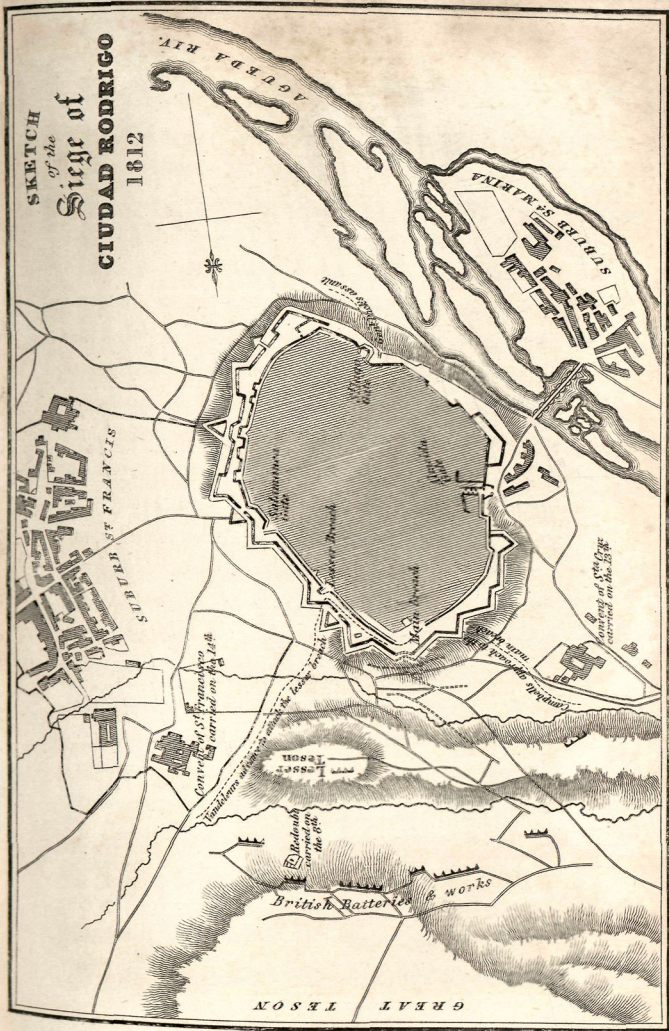
Rickards carried on the 6th

British Batteries & works

Convict of St Cruz carried on the 25th

Camp built near the

GREAT TESSON





the blind appetites of their brutal nature became again subjected to moral restraint. CHAP. VII.

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The loss of the allies in the siege and storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, was considerable, though not more than might have been anticipated in such an operation. It amounted to one thousand three hundred and ten men in killed and wounded. Of the garrison one thousand seven hundred were made prisoners, and their loss in killed and wounded was estimated at a thousand. In the town were found a battering train of forty-four pieces, an immense quantity of ammunition, several thousand stand of arms, and considerable stores of provisions.

The reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo, was unquestionably an operation of great brilliance. It was effected in the depth of winter, with a rapidity for which Marmont was altogether unprepared. The following are extracts from his reports to Berthier:—"I had collected five divisions for the purpose of throwing supplies into Ciudad Rodrigo; but this force is now inadequate to the object. I am, therefore, under the necessity of recalling two divisions from the army of the north. I shall then have above sixty thousand men, with whom I shall march

CHAP. VII. against the enemy. You may expect events as fortunate as glorious for the French army."

1812.

January.

Thus did Marshal Marmont write on the sixteenth of January. On the twentieth, he is forced to record the failure of his hopes. "On the sixteenth, the English batteries opened their fire at a great distance. On the nineteenth, the place was taken by storm, and fell into the power of the enemy. There is something so *incomprehensible* in this, that I allow myself no observation. I am not yet provided with the requisite information." The warmest admirer of Lord Wellington, need desire no more honourable testimony to his skill, activity, and boldness, than is afforded by these extracts.

The Spanish government and nation were not slow in expressing their gratitude for the signal service which had been rendered to their cause. *Te Deum* was sung in the churches of Cadiz; a vote of thanks to Lord Wellington passed by acclamation in the Cortes; and, as a permanent memorial of Spanish gratitude, they conferred on him the dignity of a grandee of the first class, with the title of Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Nor were his own government and country more backward in manifesting their deep sense

of so splendid an achievement. It raised the confidence of the people in their army and its leader. Lord Wellington, with the approbation of all classes, was raised to the dignity of an Earl of the United Kingdom; and the Parliament, besides a vote of thanks to the army, annexed to the title an annuity of two thousand pounds a year, as a testimony of the national gratitude.

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It might have been expected that the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo would have animated the Spanish people into measures of vigour and activity. It had not this effect. Throughout the whole provinces, with the exception of Catalonia, there was an utter absence of energy; no advantage was taken of the opportunities afforded of combined and efficacious exertion. In the north, Dorsenne had been compelled to evacuate the Asturias and part of Leon, to collect forces for the succour of Ciudad Rodrigo. The retreat was precipitate, yet the Spaniards took no advantage of it. Galicia had long been freed from the presence of an enemy, yet what had the inhabitants of that province done for the liberation of their country? Had a strong Gallician army been in the field, it would have become im-

CHAP. VII. possible for Dorsenne to have joined Marmont,
1812. and the whole scheme of the enemy's operations might at once have been overthrown. But Galicia did nothing. Her liberation had not been the signal of energetic preparation, but of inaction; and the sole fruit of her patriotism had been the collection of a force of ten thousand men, perhaps worse disciplined and provided than any other force in the Peninsula.

In Catalonia, a better spirit prevailed under circumstances of disadvantage immeasurably greater. A long succession of misfortune had raised instead of depressing the energies of the people. If, by the atrocities of Tarragona, Suchet hoped to quell the gallant Catalans into submission, he was deceived. If the spirit of patriotism and revenge, which glowed within them, could have been quenched by the most profuse outpouring of blood, it would long have ceased to burn. But this was not so. The Catalans, in undiminished numbers, continued to flock to the standard of their country, ready to peril all for the vindication of their freedom; and in spite of the vindictive and disgraceful cruelty with which they had been persecuted, Catalonia was still in arms.

During the siege of Valencia, General Lacy, who had succeeded Campoverde in the command of the Catalan army, took advantage of the moment to make an attempt on Tarragona, assisted by a British squadron then cruising in that quarter.

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Having drawn together a force of ten thousand Miquelets and regulars, Lacy accordingly advanced to blockade Tarragona. On receiving intelligence of this movement, General Decaen despatched a division under Maurice Mathieu, to raise the blockade, and bring Lacy to battle. Having been joined on his march by a detachment of three thousand men from Barcelona, the force of the two armies was nearly equal. On the twenty-second of January, the French arrived at Villa Franca, and in order to deceive Lacy with regard to the amount of his force, the troops were brought up, not in a body, but in successive detachments.

This stratagem was successful. Lacy, imagining he had only to deal with a brigade, raised the blockade to give battle. He was attacked on the twenty-fourth, on the heights of Altafulla, and after a severe contest, in which victory long wavered between the armies, was

Jan. 24.



CHAP. VII. compelled to retreat through the mountains towards Cervera, with the loss of his artillery.

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While Maurice Mathieu was thus employed in raising the siege of Tarragona, Decaen manoeuvred against the forces under Sarsfield and Rovira, in the direction of Vich and Manresa. A desultory and irregular warfare ensued, in which the native troops, from their activity and knowledge of the country, had generally the advantage.

Marshal Suchet was not slow in taking advantage of that brilliant train of success which had hitherto marked his progress, to push his conquests still further. He gained possession of Guardia, Denia, Alzira, and St. Felippe; and from the Pyrenees to the gates of Alicante Peninsula was the only fortified place in possession of the Spaniards.

Shortly after the fall of Valencia, General Montbrun, with three divisions of the army of Portugal, arrived at Almanza, and anxious to signalize his zeal, he marched to Alicante, in hope of intimidating the governor into a surrender of the city. This enterprise, which was undertaken in opposition to the opinion of Marshal Suchet, failed. The governor at once re-

jected the proposals of Montbrun; and that officer, having thrown a few shells into the town, found it necessary to retreat, and shortly afterwards rejoined the army of Marmont.

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Suchet then detached a division of his army under General Severoli, to commence operations against the fort of Peniscola. Peniscola is a place of great strength, built on an isolated rock, jutting out into the sea, and connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus. The garrison was commanded by General Navarro, and consisted of a thousand men. On the twenty-eighth of January, the French batteries opened fire, and on the fourth of February, the governor disgracefully capitulated. So lost to shame was this man, that he even made a merit with Severoli of his cowardice. At the moment of surrender, he boasted of having means of resistance for two months, and of having refused to admit the English, who wished to lend aid to the garrison. In Peniscola, the enemy gained possession of sixty-six guns, and large stores of provision and ammunition.

Feb. 4.

In the south, some partial successes were achieved. On the sixteenth of February, Balasteros attacked the French General Maransin,

Feb. 16.

CHAP. VII. near Cartama, with a force of about three thousand men. The numbers on both sides were nearly equal, but the Spaniards had the advantage of ground; and Ballasteros, concentrating his choicest troops, made a furious attack on the left of Maransin, and drove back that part of the line. The conflict was extremely obstinate, and lasted for three hours. At length, the French fled in confusion, and were pursued as far as Malaga.

1812.

February.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF BADAJOS—ATTACK
ON ALMARAZ.

ON the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, Lord Wel-
 lington took immediate measures to repair the
 works, and put the fortress in a defensible state.
 Having effected this, and supplied the place with
 the requisite stores of provisions, he placed it
 under command of a Spanish governor, and
 returned to Frenada.

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 February.

He then determined on the bold project of
 throwing his army with suddenness and secrecy
 across the Tagus, and reducing Badajos before
 Soult and Marmont should be able to take effective
 measures for its relief. At this period there
 were none of the enemy's troops in Estramadura,
 except a part of the fifth corps at Villa Franca,
 and a division under General Darican at La Serena.
 But Marshal Soult could readily concentrate

CHAP. VIII. a force of forty thousand men, while that of Marmont was yet more considerable. Should these armies unite, it would be impossible to effect any thing, in face of numbers so utterly overwhelming.

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February.

The success of the enterprise, therefore, depended on secrecy and rapidity of movement, and every means were adopted by Lord Wellington to conceal his intentions from the enemy till the last moment. With this view, the artillery for the siege was embarked in large vessels at Lisbon, for a fictitious destination, and subsequently transhipped at sea into small craft, by which it was conveyed up the river Sadao to Alcacerdo Sal. From thence it was conveyed in carriages across the Alentejo to Badajos, by a route towards which it was not probable that the suspicions of the enemy would be directed.

In all the details of preparation the same prudent caution was observed ; and at length the arrangements being completed, the army on the sixth of March broke up from its quarters, and moving rapidly to the south, reached Elvas on the eleventh. One division only, covered by a few cavalry posts, remained on the Agueda.

Mar. 16. On the sixteenth of March, the army crossed

the Guadiana, and Badajos was immediately CHAP.VIII
invested by the third, fourth, and light divisions, 1812.
under command of Marshal Beresford and Gen- March.
eral Picton. Sir Thomas Graham, with the
first, sixth, and seventh divisions of infantry,
and General Slade's and General Le Marchant's
brigades of cavalry, advanced to Los Santos, Za-
fra, and Llerena; and Sir Rowland Hill, with
the second division, and the Portuguese division
of General Hamilton, and one brigade of caval-
ry, moved from his cantonments near Albuquer-
que to Almandrelejo and Merida.

General Dronet, part of whose corps was sta-
tioned at Villa Franca, finding himself thus
threatened in front and flank, immediately fell
back to Hornachos.

In the meantime the siege went on. On the
seventeenth, the weather, which had hitherto
been remarkably fine, became cold and tempestu-
ous. During the afternoon, and throughout
the night, the rain fell in torrents; and taking
advantage of the obscurity, ground was broken
within one hundred and sixty yards of Fort Pi-
curina, undiscovered by the enemy.

During the eighteenth, in spite of the ele- Mar. 17.
ments, the troops persevered in their labours in Mar. 18.

CHAP. VIII the trenches. A heavy cannonade was kept up
1812. from the town, but with little effect.

March.

On the nineteenth, the rain continued with increased violence. The troops were without shelter of any kind, and the duties of the siege were uncommonly severe. In the evening, a spirited sortie was made by the garrison, in which Colonel Fletcher, the commanding engineer, was wounded. They were speedily charged back into the town by the brigade of General Bowes; after which, the troops resumed their labours, and continued to persevere in spite of every obstacle. The loss on this occasion, amounted to one hundred and twenty men in killed and wounded.

Mar. 21.

During the night of the twenty-first, the bridge across the Guadiana was carried away by a sudden swell of the river. Owing to this misfortune, great difficulties occurred in bringing up the supplies necessary for the troops. The only communication was by a flying bridge, which could only be worked with great difficulty, and the quantity of provisions thus procured, was found so utterly inadequate to the demand, that the most serious consequences were apprehended.

There were likewise other impediments to be overcome. The trenches on the low ground were flooded, and the earth became saturated with moisture. To palliate this evil, double working parties were employed in the trenches. Some with buckets baling out the water, while others pushed forward the works. By these extraordinary exertions, favoured by a change of weather, several batteries were completed on the twenty-fourth, and, on the following day, opened fire on Fort Picurina, which Lord Wellington determined to carry by immediate assault.

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March.

Mar. 24.

The attack was made by five hundred men of the third division, formed into three detachments. The right, under command of Major Shaw of the seventy-fourth; the centre, under the Honourable Captain Powis of the eighty-third; and the left, under Major Rudd of the seventy-seventh. Two of these columns advanced from the flanks of the parallel; and attacked the work in its gorge, while the third, consisting of one hundred men, under Captain Powis, escaladed the front, at a point where the palisades had been much injured by the fire of the batteries.

Mar. 25.

The latter soon succeeded in effecting an en-

CHAP. VIII trance, and a short but violent contest ensued.

1812.

March.

The assailants and defenders were mingled in a confused *melee*, and the issue was yet undecided, when the two columns, which had attacked the work by the gorge, having succeeded, though with great difficulty, in effecting an entrance, appeared to the assistance of their comrades. This at once decided the issue of the attack. Of the garrison, consisting of two hundred and fifty men, one officer and thirty-three men alone escaped. The commander, three officers, and eighty-six men were made prisoners, and the remainder were either killed in the fort, or drowned in attempting to cross the inundation of the Rivillas. All the leading officers of the attacking columns were killed or wounded, and the total loss on the part of the besiegers exceeded two hundred men.

While the contest was going on in the fort the alarm bell was rung in the town, fire balls were thrown up in all directions, and a random fire of cannon and musquetry, was opened from every part of the ramparts. At the same time, a battalion of the garrison made a sortie from the ravelin St. Roque, but they were instantly driven back, by the detachment stationed to pro-

tect the attack. Throughout the night, a heavy fire was kept up on the fort, which did little execution.

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March.

By the capture of Picurina, the besiegers were enabled to establish their second parallel with little loss; and, on the night of the twenty-sixth, two breaching batteries opened fire, within three hundred yards of the body of the place. On the thirtieth, the fifth division under General Leith, which Lord Wellington had deemed it necessary to withdraw from Beira, arrived at Elvas, and joined the camp before Badajos.

Mar. 26.

Mar. 30.

It was now known that Soult, with his whole disposable force, was advancing to the relief of the place; and that Generals Graham and Hill—the former of whom had pushed on to Llerena—were retreating on Albuera. In the north, Marmont having collected his forces, took advantage of the absence of the allied army to cross the frontier; and masking Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, marched by Sabugal upon Guarda and Castello Branco, plundering the country as far as Covilhao in the Sierra de Estrella. The allied cavalry, which had been left to observe his motions, retreated towards the Tagus; and

CHAP. VIII a considerable body of militia, under Generals

1812.

April.

Apr. 6.

Trant and Wilson, fell back on Celorico.

Under these circumstances, the operations of the siege were pushed on, if possible, with increased rapidity; and, on the sixth of April, three extensive breaches having become practicable, orders were immediately issued for the assault. The plan of attack was as follows:—

General Picton, with the third division, was to make an attempt on the castle by escalade.

The fourth and light divisions, under Major-General Colville and Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard, were to storm the breaches in the bastions of La Trinidad and Santa Maria, and in the connecting curtain.

General Leith, with the fifth division, was to escalade the rampart near the western gate; and the left brigade, under Major-General Walker, was to make a false attack on Fort Pardaleras, which he was to turn into a real attack should circumstances prove favourable.

Brigadier-General Power, with his Portuguese brigade, was to threaten the *tête-du-pont*; and the other works on the right of the Guadiana.

At ten o'clock, on the night of the sixth, Gen-eral Colville and Colonel Barnard moved out of the trenches, and led on their divisions to the assault. On reaching the glacis they were discovered by the garrison; and instantly a tremendous fire opened. Though the carnage in the ranks was very great, the troops continued their advance, and entered the covered way at the points where the palisades had been destroyed by the batteries. The ladders were then fixed down the counterscarp, and the descent into the ditch was quickly effected.

Though the formation of the troops was necessarily broken in these operations, they immediately advanced against the breaches, and soon succeeded in gaining the ascent; but such were the obstacles prepared by the enemy, that it was found impossible to surmount them. Not only had the summits of the breaches been obstructed by chevaux-de-frize, but deep and wide trenches had been dug, in the bottom of which were planted iron spikes, and the whole of the surrounding buildings were casemated and occupied by light infantry. To overcome these obstacles, many gallant but unsuccessful attempts were made by the troops; but after persevering with

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