

The greater part of the soldiers, however, succeeded in reaching Tarragona, being favoured by the darkness. Reding arrived there on the night of the action. This brave but unfortunate leader had received several wounds, of which he made no mention in his despatches. One of these subsequently proved mortal. The artillery and baggage fell into the enemy's hands.

CHAP. VI.

1809.

February.

After the battle of Valls, St. Cyr remained for about three weeks in the plain of Tarragona, where he experienced continual annoyance from the attacks of the Miquelets. This circumstance and the difficulty of feeding his army in a situation where his communications and foraging parties were continually liable to be cut off, at length induced him to retire towards the Llobregat. The retreat of the French was of the greatest importance to the inhabitants of Tarragona. A fever had broken out in the city, and the departure of the enemy gave room for the distribution of the sick, and opportunity to relieve the over-crowded population collected within its walls. Reding died of his wounds. He was a Swiss by birth, and brother to the celebrated patriot, Aloys Reding. Theodore fell in

April.

CHAP. VI. the cause for which Aloys had fought—the cause of freedom.

1809.

April.

On the death of Reding, the Marquis de Coupigny succeeded to the temporary command of the Catalan army. He was superseded by Blake, whose powers were more extensive than those of his predecessors, being appointed Commander-in-chief in Catalonia, Valencia, and Arragon. The loss of nearly all the fortresses, and the dispersion of the armies, compelled him for a time to limit his views to the re-organization of the troops, and the encouragement of that species of harassing warfare for which the character of the country afforded such peculiar facilities.

May.

Having succeeded in collecting a considerable force, the views of Blake became more extended. His first operations were fortunate. A French detachment, of about one thousand men, were cut off in an attempt to regain the fortress of Monzon. Blake then resolved to attempt the recovery of the city of Alcaniz, a position of considerable importance, as it intercepted the communication between Mequimenza and Tortosa, and commanded the high road to Valencia.

May 28.

In this, Blake was again successful. The town

was taken; and the enemy, commanded by Su-
chet, were repulsed in their most powerful ef-
forts to regain it. After four attacks, the
French army were compelled to retreat with
great loss.

CHAP. VI.
1809.
June.

The next object of Blake was the recovery of
Zaragoza. With the united armies of Arragon
and Valencia, he attacked the enemy under
Suchet, who were strongly posted in front of
the town. Here his good fortune failed. His
troops were repulsed with considerable loss;
and, harassed in his retreat by the French ar-
my, he took up a position on the heights of Sta.
Maria, above Belchite, and resolved to stand
the issue of a battle.

Jun. 15.

This too was unfortunate. The raw Valen-
cian troops gave way with little resistance. The
panic spread, and the whole army soon fled in
confusion, leaving their arms, artillery, and am-
munition on the field. To this disgraceful con-
duct of the troops, a single regiment alone af-
forded an exception. They rallied at a short
distance from the field, but were speedily cut to
pieces.

Jun. 18.

Suchet rapidly followed up the advantage he
had thus easily acquired. He entered Alcaniz,

CHAP. VI. Calanda, and Carpe, making many prisoners, and dispersing everything opposed to him. In Aragon resistance was no longer attempted, and Blake retired into Catalonia, where he endeavoured to re-organize his scattered army.

1809.

June.

It was at this period that the system of Guerilla warfare, which had spontaneously sprung up in different parts of the Peninsula, became so widely extended as to exercise an important influence on the character of the contest.

When the French first attempted the subjugation of Spain, so pervading was the hostility of the natives, that it was found necessary to divide their armies into small bodies, in order to procure subsistence, and maintain subjection in the towns and villages. Inferior officers were thus raised into commanders; and, restrained by no feeling of responsibility, plunder, cruelty, and oppression, on the one hand, were followed by hatred and desire of vengeance, on the other. Thus strife, of the most deadly and inveterate character, was daily waged between the invaders and the native population. Many of the latter, rendered desperate by the destruction of their property, fled to the mountains, where they remained, unless when compelled

by necessity to descend to the neighbouring vil-
lages in search of provisions. When at these
times they chanced to encounter a small party
of the enemy, an irregular fight ensued. No
quarter was given on either side, and the bloody
character of these contests tended still further
to increase the feelings of animosity on both
sides. The French, indignant at the slaughter
of their countrymen, by men whom they at once
feared and despised, continued to wreak their
vengeance on the defenceless inhabitants. These
were driven in greater numbers to join the des-
perate and lawless bands in the mountains; and
thus arose that general and extended system of
warfare, which carried with it results far great-
er and more important to the cause of Spain,
than the greatest successes which her armies
had been able to achieve.

The augmented atrocities of the invaders,
tended only to deepen the hatred of the nation,
and to impress more indelibly the necessity of
resistance. Unity of sentiment and purpose
brought with it a certain unity of action in the
undirected efforts of the people; and to regular
warfare succeeded a system of war in detail,—a
species of organized disorder,—of petty but fe-

CHAP. VI.

1809.

CHAP. VI. rocious contests, at once suited to the circum-

1809.

stances of the country, and the fierce and untamed spirit of its population. These bands, in their character and objects at once predatory and patriotic, were joined by active and enterprising men of all classes. Intelligence of their successes, exaggerated by frequent repetition, spread like wildfire through the country, stimulating the hopes, and increasing the confidence of the people ; and the French soon found themselves assailed by an instrument of tremendous power, to which no efficacious resistance could be offered.

The Guerillas were without uniform and without pay. Having a perfect knowledge of the country, they assembled or dispersed at pleasure ; and thus while they were always prepared to co-operate for the destruction of such bodies of the enemy as approached their district, they in a moment became intangible to any superior force detached in pursuit.

In the different provinces, leaders of distinguished talent and enterprize occasionally arose, who gave to this desultory warfare additional vigour and effect. The names of men, who contributed so powerfully to the liberation of their

country, merit record. In Old Castile the Guerillas were commanded by Juan Diaz Martin, better known by the title of the Empecinado. In Asturias, the chief of this body was Juan Diaz Porlier. In Navarre, Don Mariano de Renovales, who had distinguished himself by the defence of the Convent of St. Joseph, during the siege of Zaragoza, collected a band of mountaineers, and occasioned much annoyance to the enemy. High offers were made, in hope of inducing him to join the French service; but the patriotism of Renovales was inflexible.

Last, not least, was Xavier Mina. This celebrated leader brought the system of Guerilla warfare to its greatest perfection. In the northern provinces he occasioned the most important losses to the enemy, by his boldness and perpetual vigilance. The most strenuous efforts were repeatedly made to surprise and annihilate his force; but in vain. His band was like the Giant, in Ariosto, whose limbs, when severed by the sword of Astolfo, again united, and presented an antagonist, whom the most powerful efforts of hostility could not subdue.

In the year following, Mina was taken by the enemy, and sent prisoner into France.—

CHAP. VI. His uncle, Espoz y Mina, succeeded him in command; and, by that leader, the system of desultory warfare was carried on with undiminished vigour and success.

1809.

On the whole, since the commencement of the year, a material improvement had taken place in the prospects of the Spanish nation. The enemy had been compelled to a disgraceful abandonment both of Portugal and Gallicia; a supply of money had been received from the American colonies; Napoleon, in the prosecution of the war with Austria, had at Essling encountered a severe reverse, and a British army was preparing to advance into Spain, with the view of driving the invaders from the capital.

In the succeeding portion of this work, Spain will no longer be found exclusively dependent on her own energies and resources. From the period when Sir Arthur Wellesley returned to the Peninsula, a mightier agent was continually at work for her deliverance. It is to the operations of the British armies that the attention of the reader will henceforth be chiefly directed; and the narrowness of our limits demands that the efforts of the native troops—rarely attended by important or permanent success—should be noticed with comparative brevity.

CHAPTER VII.

CAMPAIGN OF WELLESLEY AND CUESTA.

ON their return from Oporto, the British army concentrated on the Tagus. Victor had withdrawn from the frontier of Portugal to Talavera de la Reyna, where he was kept in check by Cuesta. Sir Arthur Wellesley, therefore, found himself at liberty to engage in operations for the liberation of Spain.

CHAP. VII.
1809.
June.

At the period in question, the distribution of the French armies was nearly as follows:— Victor, with about twenty-three thousand men, was on the Tagus; a corps of eighteen thousand, under Sebastiani, was in La Mancha; the corps of Ney, Mortier, and Soult, amounting in all to about sixty thousand men, were in Galicia, Leon and Old Castile; ten thousand were in the neighbourhood of Madrid; in Ar-

CHAP. VII. ragon and Catalonia there were about forty thousand; and, in addition to the force already enumerated, there was a division of cavalry, under Kellerman, in Old Castile, employed in maintaining the communication between Madrid and Burgos. Neither the army in Catalonia nor the force of Kellerman, however, could be considered as disposable for the general purposes of the war, unless in cases of the greatest emergency.

1809.

June.

The allied armies were disposed in the following manner:—The British, consisting of about nineteen thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry, were, in the neighbourhood of Abrantes, preparing to enter Spain; the Estramaduran army, under Cuesta, occupied the left bank of the Tagus, and commanded the bridge at Almaraz,—it consisted of about thirty-seven thousand men; a force of nearly eighteen thousand, under Vanegas, was in the Carolinas; the army of Romana, about fifteen thousand strong, was in Galicia, and might be expected to hold in check the corps of Ney. Blake, with about twenty thousand men, was in Valencia.

Such was the relative position of the hostile armies. The plan of operations concerted by Sir

Arthur Wellesley and Cuesta was as follows :— CHAP. VII.

The British army was to march on Placentia, and having formed a junction with that under Cuesta, the combined armies were to advance on Madrid, with the view of liberating the capital. Twelve thousand Portuguese, under Beresford, with a Spanish force of about ten thousand men, commanded by the Duke del Parque, were to watch the operations of Soult, from the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo; and detachments of the Spanish army were, likewise, to be posted at Perales and Banos, to maintain these important passes, and check Soult's advance on Placentia. Vanegas was to descend from La Mancha, and advance on the capital from the south.

 1809.

June.

We would now say something of the country which is about to become the scene of operations, at once memorable and important.

The frontier of Spain, between the Douro and the Tagus, presents but two lines which an invading army can follow in advancing upon Madrid. The one runs by Salamanca, where it crosses the Tormes; the other by Placentia and the valley of the Tagus. The whole of the country between these two points is impracti-

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the Campaign
of 1809.

CHAP. VII. cable for artillery. The long chain of mountains, which take their rise towards the sources of the Tagus, follow that river in its course to where it enters the frontier of Portugal, and form an immense and almost impassable barrier from Segovia to Placentia. Between these mountains and the river lies what is called the valley of the Tagus, at some places only a few miles wide, at others enlarging in latitude according to the inflections of the river. Along this valley runs the principal road from Placentia to Madrid.

1809.

A country, which is bounded on one flank by a deep river, and on the other by a range of lofty mountains, must naturally be supposed to afford strong stations of defence. It does so at Oropesa, at Maqueda, and at Santa Cruz; and by defending these positions, the French would have been enabled to oppose very powerful obstacles to the advance of the allies.

The northern road to the capital, leading by the Douro, was defended by the army under Soult, consisting of his own corps, and those of Ney and Mortier, which could be concentrated by a few marches. Victor's force occupied the road leading by the valley of the Tagus. These

armies communicated across the intervening mountains, by the roads in the neighbourhood of Segovia, while by that leading from Salamanca to Placentia, either Victor or Soult would be enabled to act offensively against the rear of an enemy who should advance against the other. The immediate object of both leaders was to cover the capital, the possession of which, in every point of view, was of the greatest consequence to the invaders.

CHAP. VII.

1809.

June.

On the twenty-seventh of June, the British army broke up from its cantonments on the Tagus, and, in two columns, directed its march on Placentia. Of these, one, consisting of three divisions of infantry, and the whole of the cavalry, advanced by way of Coria; the other column proceeded by a different route, and the whole army were concentrated at Placentia about the tenth of July. The Lusitanian legion, under Sir Robert Wilson, with several Spanish battalions of light infantry, were stationed on the Tietar, in order to act independently on the flank or rear of the enemy, as circumstances might direct.

Jul. 10.

From Placentia the operations of Sir Arthur Wellesley might, with equal facility, be directed

CHAP. VII. against either Soult or Victor; and, while the

1809.

July.

British army remained in that neighbourhood, no decided indication had been given of the intention of its leader. But the moment it commenced its march from Placentia, the object of the allies could no longer remain concealed; and one of the French armies would, from that moment, find itself at liberty to engage in operations in support of that threatened with attack, either by effecting a junction by the passes of the Guadarama, or by moving towards Placentia, and thus placing itself in rear of the allied armies.

While the army remained at Placentia, Sir Arthur Wellesley went to the Spanish headquarters, and held an interview with Cuesta. He found that leader decidedly averse from the project of dividing his army, and anxious that the passes of Perales and Banos should be occupied by the British, in order that his own force might enjoy the chief honour of defeating Victor in the contemplated engagement. On these points, however, he was at length overruled, but the force eventually detached was altogether inadequate to the object. The plan of operations failed, too, in another particular. The orders

sent to Vanegas were countermanded by the Junta; and thus did the corps under that General remain inoperative, at the moment when its services were most necessary to the success of the campaign.

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July.

In the meanwhile, the most confident promises were made by Cuesta, that no difficulty would be found in provisioning the armies in the country they were about to enter; and on the return of Sir Arthur Wellesley, rapid preparations were made for continuing the advance on Madrid.

On the eighteenth, the army broke up from Placentia, and halted at Majadas; thus clearly indicating that the corps of Victor was about to become the immediate object of hostile operation. On the twentieth, the British headquarters were at Oropesa, where a junction was effected with Cuesta's army. On the twenty-second, the advance was continued; and the enemy were driven from the town of Talavera de la Reyna, across the Alberche, where Victor placed his army in position.

Jul. 18.

Jul. 22.

Sir Arthur Wellesley was anxious to attack the enemy on the morning of the twenty-third, but to this measure Cuesta refused his

CHAP.VII. assent. In vain did the British General urge
 1809. the inevitable dangers of delay in the precar-
 July. ous position of the armies, and entreat that
 time so precious should not be wasted in inac-
 tion. Cuesta could neither be swayed by argu-
 ment nor influenced by entreaty. He was ob-
 stinate and lethargic; fell asleep during the con-
 ference; and Sir Arthur Wellesley felt the full
 extent of his misfortune, in being thus depend-
 ant on a man, who, however honest in principle,
 was evidently wanting in all the qualities of a
 General.

In the meanwhile, Sir Robert Wilson quitted
 Jul. 23. his position on the Tietar on the fifteenth, and
 on the twenty-third reached Escalona, a town
 about eight leagues distant from Madrid, and in
 rear of Victor's army. In consequence of this
 movement, the French army fell back during
 the night in the direction of Toledo.

Other circumstances likewise contributed to
 thwart the views of Sir Arthur Wellesley. The
 promise that his army during its advance would
 be furnished with the necessary supplies by the
 authorities of the country, had not been fulfilled.
 The troops had suffered considerably from want
 of provisions; and Sir Arthur, thus circumstanced,

deemed it right to inform Cuesta, that unless furnished with the articles which he had hitherto repeatedly and vainly demanded, he could not consent that his army—utterly deficient both in means of transport and subsistence—should advance to a greater distance from their resources.

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1809.

July.

This notification contributed still further to derange the cordiality of the allied leaders. Cuesta expressed his determination to pursue the enemy, even if unsupported by the British; and on the twenty-fourth of July, he put his army in motion by Santa Olalla, where he arrived on the morning of the twenty-fifth.

Jul. 24.

Early on the twenty-sixth, the van of Cuesta's army was attacked by the enemy, and after considerable resistance driven back in confusion. The Duke del Albuquerque advanced with his division to their support; and by a gallant charge repulsed the enemy, and thus enabled the defeated troops to rally. This timely success saved the army; for the road was blocked up with baggage and provision waggons, and panic had already begun to diffuse itself in the ranks.

Jul. 26.

After this engagement the Spanish army was suffered to fall back unmolested to the Alberche,

CHAP. VII. where a British force was stationed for its sup-

1809.

July.

port. The ground on which Cuesta halted his army was low and unfavourable, with the river in its rear; yet in this position he determined to give battle. At daybreak, Sir Arthur Wellesley entered the Spanish camp, and sought an interview with Cuesta. The General he found asleep in his tent, and the troops in that state of disorder, into which an imperfectly disciplined army is almost necessarily thrown, by an unforeseen and hasty retreat. Every persuasion was adopted to induce Cuesta to quit his present dangerous position, and retire to the high ground on the opposite side of the Alberche. The old Spaniard, however, was deaf to argument. His constant reply was, "in these times a retiring army is always beaten;" and he therefore determined to maintain his ground.

Annoyed at the unreasonable and perverse obstinacy of his coadjutor, Sir Arthur Wellesley declined committing his army by any participation in a project so absurdly perilous, and fell back to a strong position in the neighbourhood of Talavera. Thus left unsupported, the eyes of Cuesta were at length opened to the danger which awaited him; and on the approach

of the enemy, he retired across the Alberche, and again united his army with the British. CHAP. VII.

Intelligence of the movements of the allied armies had no sooner reached Madrid, than Joseph, accompanied by Marshal Jourdan, who acted as Major-General to the armies, set out from Madrid with all his disposable troops; and effected an union with the corps of Victor and Sebastiani, in the neighbourhood of Toledo. Immediate orders were despatched to Marshal Soult, to form a junction with the corps of Ney and Mortier; and, with this combined force, to advance, by rapid marches, on Placentia, with the view of intercepting the line of operations of the allied armies, and cutting off their retreat.

1809.

July.

Jul. 24.

The situation of Sir Arthur Wellesley had now become critical in the extreme. The army in his front amounted to about fifty thousand men; that advancing in his rear was considerably stronger. In such circumstances, had the army under Joseph remained—as it was their obvious policy to have done—on the defensive, no choice remained to the British General but to attack them under all advantages of position, or to retreat. In the former case,

CHAP. VII. he could have derived little support from the Spanish army, whose want of steadiness and discipline disqualified them from manœuvring in présence of an enemy enjoying all the advantages of ground. In the latter case, the only road open was to the southward of the Tagus; and, to effect the passage of that river, when closely followed by a powerful enemy, would necessarily have been an operation of great difficulty and danger.

1809.

July.

The plan of the campaign, therefore, appears to have been radically vicious. The allies were placed in a situation from the perils of which they could be extricated only by retreat. While every hour improved the situation of the French, it necessarily darkened the prospects of their opponents. In truth the utmost that could be hoped was, that the talent and promptitude of Sir Arthur Wellesley, would be found sufficient to extricate his army from its perilous position, after signaling the prowess of British soldiers, by the acquisition of a barren though honourable victory.

Such was the situation of Sir Arthur Wellesley before the battle of Talavera. From

much of its danger, he was fortunately extricated CHAP. VII.
 by the blunder of the enemy, who determined on
 attacking the allied armies in their position. 1809.
July.

The ground occupied by the allies, was about two miles in extent. The Spanish army was on the right, the British on the left of the line. The position of the former was extremely strong, being almost unapproachable, from the mud enclosures of olive grounds and vineyards in their front; and they were so posted in the ravines which abounded, as to be sheltered from the enemy's artillery. Their right was *appuyed* by the Tagus; their left by the British.

The ground on the centre and left of the line was more open, but intersected with roads leading to the town; and the front of the whole position was covered by a ravine formed by the winter torrents, but then dry. The left flank of the British rested on an eminence of considerable boldness, and their right on another somewhat lower, on which a redoubt had been begun, in order to secure the connexion of the armies, but was not sufficiently advanced to add much to the security of the troops stationed for defence of the height. These consisted of two brigades of infantry, under Brigadier-General

CHAP. VII. Campbell, supported by a battery of about ten
1809. guns. The Guards, General Cameron's brigade,
July. and the German legion, formed the centre, under
Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke. The division
of General Hill was on the left, where two bri-
gades of artillery were posted for defence of the
hill in which the position terminated. The re-
mainder of the guns were distributed on the most
favourable points along the line.

The cavalry was commanded by Lieutenant-
General Payne. Major-General Cotton's light
brigade supported the right and centre. Briga-
dier-General Anson's, and the heavy brigade
under General Fane, were on the left.

The Spanish infantry was formed in two lines,
and in rear of the left the Duke del Albuquerque
was stationed with the main body of the Spanish
cavalry. Subsequently a detachment of about
three thousand light infantry, under Don Luis
Bassecourt, was moved to the valley below the
British left, in order to observe the movements
of a body of the enemy which appeared in the
mountains beyond, but at too great a distance to
exert any influence on the contest.

A division of infantry and a brigade of caval-
ry, under General Mackenzie, had been stationed

in a wood on the right of the Alberche, which covered the left of the British army. About noon, this advanced force was suddenly attacked by the enemy, who succeeded in penetrating between the two brigades of which it was composed. Some confusion ensued, but order was speedily restored by the exertions of the officers, and the retreat was finely covered by the brigade of Colonel Donkin, which retired and took up its position with perfect regularity and steadiness. The division of General Mackenzie was then posted as a second line in rear of the centre.

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July.

Jul. 27.

In this affair Sir Arthur Wellesley narrowly escaped being made prisoner. He had ascended a tower immediately in rear of Mackenzie's division, to observe the motions of the enemy. Fortunately, he observed the troops to falter, and descended barely in time to escape, by throwing himself on his horse in the midst of the affray.

In the meantime, the enemy continued to push on his columns, and a partial action ensued along the whole front of the line. A division of cavalry advanced towards the right of the allies, and threatened the town of Talavera. But the difficulties of the ground, and the fire of the Spanish batteries, soon obliged them to re-

CHAP. VI. treat. A body of about five thousand Spaniards, however, though posted in the strongest manner, threw down their arms and fled.*

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July.

Under these circumstances, the whole French army, in number about fifty thousand, assembled in front of the position occupied by the allies. Towards evening, a resolute attempt was made to gain possession of the hill on the left, which was regarded as the key of the position. The enemy advanced at double-quick to the assault, covered by a heavy cannonade. The attack being unexpected, was for a moment successful, and the French gained possession of the height; but the forty-eighth and twenty-ninth regiments being brought up by General Hill, poured in a volley; and the twenty-ninth, by a most splendid charge, drove back the enemy in confusion, and established themselves on the summit.

In the course of the night another attempt

* So indignant was Cuesta at this dastardly conduct, that after the action he ordered the division to be decimated; and it was only at the earnest entreaty of Sir Arthur Wellesley, that he consented to a second decimation of those on whom the lot had fallen. In consequence, only six officers, and about thirty men were executed.—JONES.

was made to carry this important post. This too was unfortunate. Colonel Donkin's brigade had been moved up to support the troops on the hill; and the enemy were repulsed with little difficulty. The loss on both sides during these attacks was considerable. General Hill was at one time surrounded by the enemy, and received a wound in the shoulder.

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July.

The troops lay all night upon their arms in expectation of attack. At two in the morning, the Spanish line was alarmed by the approach of the enemy's light troops, who were received by a brisk discharge of musquetry, which ceased in about ten minutes; and the silence of night again prevailed on the field of battle.

At length day broke on the contending armies, drawn up in battle-array, in the positions which they respectively occupied at the commencement of the action on the preceding evening. At five o'clock, two strong columns of the French were formed in front of the height on the left, which they had already twice vainly attempted to carry. Under cover of a tremendous fire from fifty pieces of cannon, the columns advanced across the ravine, which ran along the front of the position, and ascended

Jul. 28.

CHAP. VII. the acclivity on which were posted the brigades
of General Tilson and General Richard Stewart.
1809. By the troops under these officers, they
July. were received with the utmost gallantry and
steadiness. A heavy fire of musquetry on both
sides was followed by a charge from the British;
and the assailants were driven back at the
bayonet's point, with great slaughter. The British
cavalry were ordered up to charge the right
flank of the retiring column, but unfortunately
it was at too great a distance.

The object, however, was too important to be
lightly given up by the enemy. The attempt
on the height was repeatedly made, and repeatedly
terminated in a similar result, till, disheartened
by the uniform failure of their efforts, they
retired from the scene of contest, leaving the
ground covered with their dead.

About eleven o'clock the firing ceased. A
period of truce was tacitly recognised by both
armies, which the French employed in cooking
their dinners, while the British reposed on the
ground, apparently regardless of the presence of
their enemy.

During this interval, likewise, the wounded
on both sides were conveyed to the rear. From

the closeness of the engagement, they lay intermingled on the field; and while engaged in this humane and peaceful duty, a friendly intercourse took place between the French and English soldiers; and, shaking hands, they mutually expressed admiration of the gallantry displayed by their opponents.

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July.

About one o'clock, it became evident, from several heavy clouds of dust, that the enemy's columns were again advancing. At two, the work of havoc recommenced with a heavy cannonade, followed by a general attack on the whole front of the British line. The enemy's infantry came on in four distinct columns, covered by their light troops, while the cavalry, drawn up in rear, waited only for the first appearance of confusion to complete the victory by an overwhelming charge.

Notwithstanding the destruction which the French artillery occasioned in their ranks, the British did not open fire till the close approach of the columns enabled them to do so with effect. That on the right, under General Sebastiani, was suffered nearly to reach the summit of the hill crowned by the redoubt, before any obstruction was made to their progress.

CHAP. VII. A heavy fire was at length opened by General
 1809. Campbell's brigade, and two Spanish batta-
 July. lions, posted on the height. The British then
 charged, and in gallant style drove the enemy
 before them; and, carrying a battery, took
 thirteen pieces of cannon. The broken col-
 umn, however, having rallied, was again ad-
 vancing, when it was charged in flank by a
 Spanish regiment of cavalry, and compelled
 once more to retreat in confusion.

In the meantime two columns on the enemy's
 right, consisting of Ruffin's and Villatte's divi-
 sions, supported by cavalry, again endeavoured
 to gain possession of the hill on the left. They
 were directed to support the attack on the front,
 by marching along the bottom of the ravine, and
 turning the flank of the position; while a body
 of light troops, by a wide movement across the
 mountains, were to threaten an advance on the
 rear. To watch the movements of the latter, a
 body of Spanish light infantry were moved into
 the valley, in rear of the left of the position.

These formidable preparations for the attack
 of what was unquestionably the most important
 point in the whole position, naturally excited
 apprehensions for its safety. The conical shape