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hour of drunkenness, or of necessity, or despair: the conscription brought into its ranks men of a better description, both as to their parentage, their breeding, and their prospects in life, insomuch, that the great majority are truly described as sober, orderly, intelligent, and more or less educated. Nor is it to be believed, that, although they acted like monsters of wickedness in this campaign, they were in any degree worse than other men by nature: on the contrary, the national character of the French, Germans, and Netherlanders, authorises a presumption that they were inclined to be, and would have been good and useful members of society, if the service in which they were compulsorily engaged had not made them children of perdition. How nefarious, then, must have been the system of that Government which deliberately placed its armies in circumstances where this depravation was inevitably produced! . . . how deserving of everlasting infamy the individual by whose absolute will that Government was directed! . . . and how deep the guilt of those who were the willing and active agents of such a Government, . . . the devoted servants of such a ruler! No equitable reader will suppose that any national reproach is intended in thus dwelling upon the crimes which were committed throughout the Peninsular war by the French and their allies: Englishmen under like circumstances would have been equally depraved: the reproach is not upon a brave and noble nation; it rests upon those alone on whom the guilt abides; and as we tender the welfare and improvement of the human race, let us hope that it may be perpetual!

The retreat of this abominable army was marked by havoc, conflagration, and cruelties of every kind. The towns of Torres Novas, Thomar, and Pernes, with the villages which were near the British lines, suffered least, because the enemy wished not to discover their intention of retreating. In these

places some of the corps had had their head-quarters for four months, and some of the inhabitants had been induced to remain; these people had now fresh proof of their delusion, in supposing that honour or humanity were to be found in the armies of Buonaparte; the French sacked their houses, and destroyed as many as time permitted on the night of their departure; and when their movements could no longer be concealed, they burnt, by Massena's orders, every town and village through which they passed.

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The most venerable structure in Portugal was the convent of Alcobaca. Its foundation was coeval with the monarchy. It had been the burial-place of the kings of Portugal for many generations. The munificence of nobles and princes, the craft of superstition, and the industry and learning of its members in better times, had contributed to fill this splendid pile with treasures of every kind. Its gorgeous vestments, its vessels of plate and gold, and its almost matchless jewelry, excited the admiration of the vulgar; the devotee and the philosopher were equally astonished at the extraordinary articles in its Relic-room; the artist and the antiquary beheld with wonder and delight its exquisite monuments of ancient art; and its archives and library were as important to Portugueze literature, as the collections of the Museum or the Bodleian are in our own country. Orders were issued from the French head-quarters to burn this place; that the work of destruction might be complete, it was begun in time, and the mattock and hammer were employed to destroy what the flames would have spared. The tessellated pavement from the entrance to the high altar was broken up with pickaxes, and the ornaments of the pillars destroyed nearly up to the arches. The French, who at this very time inserted an article in the capitulation of Badajoz, that no stipulations were therein made respecting religion because they

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were catholics like the Spaniards, mutilated here the Crucifix and the images of the Virgin, as if they studied in what manner they could most effectually shock and insult the feelings of the Portugueze. They cut the pictures which they did not burn; they broke open the tombs. Those of Pedro and Ignez de Castro were covered with historical sculptures: rich as England is in remains of this kind, we have none of equal antiquity which could be compared with them for beauty, or for their value to the antiquarian; and a story, hardly less generally known throughout Europe than the most popular parts of classical history, had in an especial manner sanctified these monuments. These, therefore, were especial objects of the enemy's malice, and more laborious mischief was exerted in destroying them, the tombs being so well constructed as not without difficulty to be destroyed. Fire was at length put to the monastery in many parts, and troops set round it to prevent the people from making any efforts to stop the conflagration. The edifice continued burning for two-and-twenty days. Two of the Cistercian brethren were afterwards appointed commissioners to search the ruins. They found some bones of Queen Orraca and part of her clothes; the body of Queen Beatriz, in a state of good preservation, and that of Pedro still entire, with the skin and hair upon it*. A few fragments only of Ignez de Castro could be found. These remains were deposited once more in the tombs, and the monuments repaired, as far as reparation was possible. The most valuable of the books and manuscripts had happily been removed in time.

* An officer whose journal is before me, and who entered Alcobaça on the 7th, describes what were supposed to be the bodies of Pedro and Ignez as having been well embalmed, and having each a great deal of hair still attached to the head.

Batalha was a structure equally sacred, and more beautiful. Had King Emanuel completed the original design, it would have excelled all other Gothic buildings; even in its unfinished state, it was the admiration of all who beheld it. It was founded upon the spot where the tent of Joam I. stood on the night before that battle which, for inferiority of numbers on the part of the conqueror, may be compared with Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt; and which, for the permanent importance of its consequences, when considered in all their bearings, is unparalleled. Here Joam was buried, after a long and glorious reign, upon the scene of his triumph; and here his four sons were buried also, men worthy of such a father; one of them being that Prince Henry whose grave, it might have been thought, would have been equally respected by all civilized nations. The monuments of these Infantes and of their parents were in a state of correspondent beauty with the temple in which they lay, and perfectly preserved. They were broken open by the French, and the remains of the dead taken from their graves to be made the mockery of these ruffians, who kicked about the head of Joam I. as a football, and left the body in the pulpit, placed in the attitude of one preaching.

Regnier's corps, which was the enemy's left, had moved from Santarem upon Thomar, from thence towards Espinhal: their centre from Pernes, by Torres Novas and Cham de Maçans, and the right from Leyria. The two latter effected their junction on the 9th in the plain before Pombal. What course the enemy would take in their retreat could not be foreseen; had they intended to retire by the way which they had entered, it was thought they would have sent a larger proportion by the Espinhal road. The centre of the allies had taken the same line as that of the French; the right advanced upon Thomar, the left upon Leyria. Our light troops had never lost sight of

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the enemy, and when the centre and right joined before Pombal, the British advanced guard, coming from Cham de Maçans, saw their junction from the heights. A brisk affair took place that day before Pombal, where the enemy had eight squadrons formed in different parts of the plain, supported by their whole cavalry. The 1st hussars and the 16th light dragoons attacked the most advanced of these squadrons, defeated them one after another, and drove them all together in confusion on their support, the troops composing which were repeatedly called upon by their officers to advance, but would not move; for they were quite dispirited, and satisfied with safety, seeing the allies were not in sufficient force to pursue their advantage. Lord Wellington could not collect a sufficient body to commence an operation before the 11th, when Loison, with three corps, and Montbrun's division of cavalry were leaving a position in front of Pombal. Having burnt the town, they attempted to hold the old castle, which stands upon an eminence above the Arunca; they were driven from thence, they then formed on the farther side of the town, and our troops did not arrive in time to complete the dispositions for attacking them while it was day; . . . but they were in time to rescue six women from the flames, whom the French had stripped naked, shut into a house, and then set the house on fire! During the night the enemy retired, and their rear took up a strong position between Pombal and Redinha, formerly a city, now a town, but bearing rather the appearance of a decayed village. They were posted at the end of a defile in front of the town, their right in a wood upon the little river Danços, their left extending to some heights upon the same stream, which has its source about two miles above the town. The light division, under Sir William Erskine, the Portuguese caçadores, under Colonel Elder, forming part, attacked their right; and Lord Wellington, bearing testimony to the merit of these allies, declared that he

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had never seen the French infantry driven from a wood in more gallant style. Our troops then formed in the plain beyond the defile with great celerity, and Sir Brent Spencer led them against the heights, from which the French were immediately driven; but their skill was conspicuous in every movement, and no local advantage escaped them. Their retreat was by a narrow bridge, and a ford close to it, over the Danços; our light troops passed with them in pursuit, but they commanded these passages with cannon, and gained time to form again upon the nearest heights, before troops enough could pass over to make a fresh disposition for attacking them. As soon as this was done, they fell back upon their main body at Condeixa; and there they sent out regular parties to drive into the camp all females above ten years of age, and these victims were delivered to the soldiers!

There was now every reason to fear that Coimbra would share the fate of Alcobaça, and Leyria, and Pombal, and that the enemy, getting into Upper Beira, would lay waste in their destructive course a track of country which had hitherto been preserved from their ravages; or that Massena would endeavour to obtain possession of Porto, and defend himself there better than Soult had done. As soon as Lord Wellington had ascertained that the enemy were directing their retreat toward the Mondego, which was on the fourth day after they retired from Santarem, he dispatched advices to General Bacelar, whose head-quarters were at S. Pedro do Sul, directing him to send his baggage across the Douro, to secure means for passing it himself, with the troops under his command, and to take measures for defending the passage both at Lamego and at Porto. It was supposed in this dispatch that Colonel Trant would have retired from Coimbra upon the Vouga, the bridge over which river he was now ordered to destroy, and then proceed to Porto. Trant, however, had intercepted a letter from Drouet to Clapa-

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rede (who was then near Guarda), which led him to expect that the French would speedily commence their retreat, and that it would be in this direction; in consequence he destroyed an arch of the bridge at Coimbra; and when the concentration of their force at Pombal and Redinha made their course no longer doubtful, he withdrew his post from Condeixa, and evacuated the suburb of S. Clara, which is on the left bank: this had just been effected on the morning of the 11th, when General Montbrun entered it with a large body of cavalry. Preparations had been made for defending the passage, and happily at that time the Mondego was not fordable. The rivers in that part of the country are rendered impassable for cavalry by a few hours' rain, the water pouring down to them from the mountains on every side; but their course is so short, that they fall as rapidly as they rise. Montbrun, having no guns with him, could not return the fire of six six-pounders, the only artillery which Trant possessed; he retired, therefore, from S. Clara to the heights above it. This movement prevented him from discovering that the river became fordable in the course of the evening, and continued so for some days following. During the night Trant received advice from Colonel Wilson, that the river had become passable at a place some ten miles above the city; and from the other hand he was informed that a few of the enemy's dragoons had actually crossed near Montemor o Velho. Measures were immediately taken for defending both fords; and the field-pieces were fired occasionally, in the hope that they might be heard at the advanced posts of the allied army, and Lord Wellington thus be assured that Coimbra was not in the enemy's possession; but the wind was southerly, and the intention therefore failed. Not doubting but that the French were in retreat and the allies in close pursuit, Trant had no thought of retiring from his post, when he now received dispatches from Bacelar, in-

closing Lord Wellington's instructions, wherein he was supposed already to have withdrawn, and was ordered to take upon himself the protection of Porto. These orders he obeyed, by sending off the main body of the militia, during the night of the 12th, toward Mealhada, remaining himself with a detachment at the bridge. In the morning there was no indication of an attempt upon the town; only a few dragoons were to be seen on the heights of S. Clara; he resolved, therefore, to place his division in a position, and proceeded to join it for that purpose; instructing the officer whom he left in command at the bridge, to take nothing upon himself in case of any communication from the enemy, but refer it to him, and act accordingly. An hour had hardly elapsed, before Montbrun summoned the city to surrender. The officer referred the summons to Trant: it had been merely made to keep in check the garrison which Montbrun supposed to be still there, and in force; for that general having found them ready on the 11th and 12th had advised Massena to retire by the Ponte de Murcella; and when Lord Wellington came up with the main body, who were strongly posted at Condeixa, to his great joy he perceived that they were sending off their baggage in that direction. Immediately he inferred that Coimbra was safe, and marching General Picton's division upon their left towards this road, now the only one open for their retreat, they were instantly dislodged, leaving Condeixa in flames. The allies then communicated with Coimbra; a detachment of cavalry, returning from their demonstration against that important city, were made prisoners, and Trant and Wilson were directed to move along the right bank of the Mondego, and prevent the enemy from sending detached parties across. In the order which Massena issued for burning every town and village, Coimbra had been particularly mentioned.

On the 14th the French rear-guard were driven from a

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strong position at Casal Nova, where they had encamped the preceding night. The whole line of their retreat was full of advantageous positions, of which they well knew how to avail themselves; but he who pursued them was also a master in the art of war; and in his own retreat had acquired a perfect knowledge of the ground. Their outposts were driven in: they were dislodged by flank movements from the posts which they successively took in the mountains, and were flung back with considerable loss upon the main body at Miranda do Corvo, where it was well posted to receive and support them. Here Regnier, with the second corps, effected his junction, so that the whole French army was now assembled. General Nightingale, who had pursued this column, rejoined the British army the same day at Espinhal: and as it was now in the power of Lord Wellington to turn their position, they abandoned it during the night.

A thick fog on the following morning gave them time, and favoured their movements. Some deserters came in, who said that they were destroying carriages, baggage, and ammunition. About nine the day cleared up, and the troops, renewing the pursuit, passed through the smoking ruins of Miranda do Corvo. Hitherto they had only seen proofs of the cruelty of the enemy along the road; they now began to see proofs of his distress; for from this place the road was strewn with the wreck of a retreating army, broken carriages, baggage, carcasses of men and beasts, the wounded and the dying. Amid this general havoc, nothing was more shocking than the number of horses, asses, and mules, which the French, when their strength failed, had hamstrung, and left to suffer a slow death. To have killed them at once would have been mercy, and mercy was a virtue which this army seemed to have forsworn: it even appeared, by the manner in which these poor creatures were grouped,