

CHAP. not a single British soldier was taken. The French loss was
 XXXVI. more than 3000. General Bellegrade was killed, General Rous-
 1811. seau mortally wounded and taken; the prisoners were only 440,
March. because there was no pursuit.

The 20th Portugueze regiment fought side by side with the British in this memorable action. One squadron of the German Legion, which had been attached to the Spanish cavalry, joined in time to make a successful charge against a squadron of French dragoons, which it completely routed. General Whittingham, with the rest of the cavalry, was engaged, meantime, in checking a corps of horse and foot who were attempting to win the height by the coast. The Walloon guards, and the battalion of Ciudad Real, which had been attached to Graham's division, and had been left on the height, made the greatest exertions to rejoin him; but it was not possible for them to arrive before the victory was decided, and the troops were too much exhausted to think of pursuing their advantage. They had been marching for twenty hours before the battle.

The distance from Barrosa to Bermeja is about three miles; Lapeña could not see what was passing at the great scene of action, and an attack was made at the same time upon Bermeja by Villatte, who had received reinforcements from Chiclana: the enemy were vigorously resisted there, and were called off by Victor in consequence of his defeat. When the Spanish general was informed of Graham's brilliant action, he entertained great hopes of succeeding in the farther movement which had been intended. In the dispatch which he sent that night to Cadiz, "The allied army," he said, "had obtained a victory so much the more satisfactory as circumstances rendered it more difficult; but the valour of the British and Spanish troops, the military skill and genius of General Graham, and the gallantry of the commandant-general of the van-guard, D. Jose Lar-

dizabal, had overcome all obstacles. I remain," he continued, "master of the enemy's position, which is so important to me for my subsequent operations."

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But no attempt was made to profit by the bloody victory which had been gained. General Graham remained some hours upon the heights which he had won, and as no supplies came to him, the commissariat mules having been dispersed at the beginning of the action, he left a small detachment there, and then withdrew his troops, and early the next morning crossed the Santi Petri. While he was on his march, two landings were effected by way of diversion, between Rota and Catalina, and between Catalina and Santa Maria by the marines of the British squadron, with 200 seamen and 80 Spanish marines: they stormed two redoubts, and dismantled all the sea defences from Rota to St. Maria, except Catalina. Preparations were made to attack the tete-du-pont and the bridge of St. Maria, but the enemy advanced in force from Puerto Real, and Sir Richard Keats, knowing that General Graham had now re-entered the Isle of Leon, ordered the men to re-embark.

March.
Diversion
on the coast.

Such was the lame and impotent conclusion of an expedition which had been long prepared and well concerted, in which the force employed was adequate to the end proposed, and of which every part that was attempted had been successfully effected. General Graham complained loudly of Lapeña; and the people of Cadiz, the Cortes, and the government, were at first equally disposed to impute the failure to the Spanish commander. The Cortes voted an address to the Regency on the ninth, saying that the national congress, not being able longer to endure the grief and bitterness of seeing the circumstances of the expedition remain in doubt and obscurity, requested the executive government to give them, as speedily as possible, a circumstantial account of the proceedings of the Spanish army. When

The Cortes
demand an
inquiry.

CHAP. this account was laid before them, they declared that the con-
 XXXVI. duct of the general with regard to the advantages which might
 1811. have been obtained on the memorable day of the battle was not
 sufficiently clear; "the Cortes therefore," said they, "in dis-
 charge of its sovereign mission, and using the supreme in-
 spection which it has reserved to itself over whatever may in-
 fluence the salvation of the kingdom, desires that the council of
 Regency will immediately institute a scrupulous investigation
 with all the rigour of military law."

*Outcry in
 England
 against
 Lapeña.*

If such was at first the prevailing opinion in Cadiz, it may well be supposed that the Spanish general would be exposed to severe censure in England. The story which obtained belief was, that Lapeña and the Spaniards had been idle spectators of the action, whereas, if they had only shown themselves upon the adjoining heights, the French would have raised the blockade, and retired in dismay to Seville; and that after the battle, while he and 12,000 Spaniards remained inactive, he sent to General Graham, whose troops were without food, and had marched sixteen hours before they came into action, desiring him to follow up the victory, for that now was the time to deliver Cadiz. A vote of thanks passed unanimously in both houses; but a few days afterwards, when the ordnance estimates were before the house, the honourable J. W. Ward said, "he hoped he might now be allowed to ask for some explanation of the deplorable misconduct of our allies; for of that conduct it would be idle to affect to speak in doubtful terms, it was reprobated with equal indignation by all parties throughout the country. Was it to be endured," said he, "that while the British troops were performing prodigies of valour in an unequal contest, that those allies, for whose independence they were fighting, should stand by, cold-blooded spectators of deeds, the bare recital of which should have been enough to warm every man of them

*April 1.
 Speech of
 Mr. Ward.*

into a hero? If, indeed, they had been so many mercenaries, and had been hired to fight for a foreign power and in behalf of a foreign cause; . . . if they had been so many Swiss, . . . in that case their breach of duty, however culpable, would have been less unaccountable, and perhaps more excusable; but here, where they were allies bound to this country in obligations greater than ever before one nation owed to another . . . our brave men lavishing those lives which their country had so much better right to claim, in defence of that cause in which those allies were principals . . . in such a case, tamely to look on while the contest between numbers and bravery hung in doubtful issue, . . . this did appear to him to betray an indifference, an apathy, which, if he could suppose it to prevail among the Spaniards, must render, in his mind, the cause of Spanish independence altogether hopeless."

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Mr. Perceval replied, "that Mr. Ward had expressed a stronger and more determined censure upon the Spaniards than could be justified by any evidence which had yet appeared. Had he expressed his regret that the English had been left to fight the battle alone, and had he required some explanation on the subject, such conduct would have been perfectly natural and right; but it was neither just nor generous thus upon insufficient grounds to prejudice men who were to undergo a legal investigation. General Graham's dispatches furnished no grounds for these sweeping accusations; the Spanish troops which had been attached to his division made every effort to come back and join in the action; and when the situation of the rest of the army, posted at four miles distance, was taken into consideration, it required more information than they possessed at present, to justify the passing a censure upon the whole Spanish army, or even upon any part of it."

Mr. Perceval.

Mr. Whitbread now rose. "He should have been glad,"

Mr. Whitbread.

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he said, "to have joined in the general expression of exultation when the vote of thanks was past; . . . he should have been glad to have added his mite to the general tribute in applause of the heroism of that day, and to have claimed the hero of that day as his much-valued friend. This he should have been glad to have done, if he could have had sufficient control over himself to have abstained from doing more. Mr. Perceval had spoken like the advocate of the Spaniards; they must be defended at all events, no matter how! And what was it that was attempted to be defended? The English army was on the point of being sacrificed . . . the Spaniards were in sight of them, within twenty minutes quick march of them! and what did they? What were they? Why, just what they have been described by his honourable friend . . . cold-blooded spectators of the battle! After coldly witnessing a band of heroes fighting and dying for their cause, General Lapeña tells our small army, exhausted with its unparalleled victory over numbers, that, forsooth, now was the time to push its success. What did this redoubted general mean? Was it insult, or treachery, or cowardice, . . . each, or all? He did not mean to complain of the Spanish people, but of their officers. He should ever think of Barrosa as a day memorable for the glory of the Britons, and not less memorable for the infamy of the Spaniards. Was it to be endured, that our brave fellows should be so basely deserted, after an excessive night-march, the moment they entered the field, against a foe always formidable from discipline, and then doubly so from numbers? Why were the two battalions withdrawn from the heights of Barrosa? why was their position abandoned precipitately to the French? who gave this order but a Spanish officer? What! should not this excite a jealousy? Was this the first time a Spanish army had been cold-blooded spectators of British heroism? Did they want this to remind them of the

stately indifference shown by Cuesta in the battle of Talavera? Was all sound in Cadiz? Was there no French party there? Were British armies never before betrayed till the battle of Barrosa? He said betrayed, for it was nothing less; the two battalions never came up till our army had repulsed the French, beaten them off, and was in hot pursuit of them as fast as our army could pursue . . . as fast as their exhausted limbs could carry their noble hearts! Then what had been our allies? . . . At Talavera nothing . . . at Barrosa nothing . . . or rather at both perhaps worse than nothing. The allied force sailed from Cadiz . . . the British fought . . . the Spaniards looked on. The British conquered; and yet the siege was not raised. Again he asked, was all sound at Cadiz? Was it true that General Graham had been obstructed and foiled in all his plans . . . that in the midst of the fight, while the British troops were doing feats which perhaps British troops alone could do, their allies were doing what, he hoped, such men alone were capable of . . . plundering the British baggage? Was this true? It was not the Spanish people he complained of; he gave them every credit; but he gave their leaders none. If all this was so, or nearly so, were the British armies to be risked so worthlessly? Were they to be abandoned to treachery or cowardice? For in either or both must have originated the unnatural, ungrateful, and infamous treatment they had met with."

Whatever error of judgement General Lapeña might have committed, the charges thus brought against him and his army were as ill-founded as they were intemperately urged. Instead of being cold-blooded spectators of the battle, the main body of the Spaniards were four miles distant; there was a thick wood between them and the scene of action, and they were themselves actually engaged at the time. And it is worthy of remark, that while invectives, which had no other tendency than

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*Remarks on
the failure
of the expedi-
tion.*

CHAP. to produce a breach between England and Spain, were thus
XXXVI. lavished upon the Spaniards, by those politicians who would
1811. have had us abandon Spain and Portugal to the tyrant's pleasure, the French were endeavouring to excite discontent between the two countries by accusations which directly contradicted these aspersions. Marshal Victor affirmed in his official account, that when he determined to attack the heights, the Spaniards under Lapeña were at the time warmly engaged; the cannonade and the fire of the musketry were extremely brisk, he said; and with that falsehood which characterised the execrable system of his government, he added, that the English, according to their custom, had wished to place the Spaniards in the post of danger, and expose themselves as little as possible.

Lapeña prayed that an immediate inquiry should be instituted, that the inquiry should be made public, and that he should be punished if he were found culpable. The inquiry was made, and the result was an honourable acquittal. The proceedings were not published; and unhappily the good opinion of the Spanish government afforded no proof, scarcely a presumption, of the deserts of those on whom it was bestowed. At this very time they appointed Mahy, who had done nothing in Galicia, but oppress the inhabitants and paralyse the efforts of a brave and willing population, to another command; and Mendizabal, by whose misconduct their best army had been destroyed, was sent to command in the North. But though it cannot be inferred that General Lapeña was not worthy of censure, because he was pronounced free from fault, little investigation may suffice to show that the outcry raised against him was intemperate, if not altogether unjust, and that the failure of the expedition was owing to the disagreement between the British and Spanish generals, more than to any misconduct on

the part of the latter. Whether prudently or not, General Graham had consented to act under Lapeña; and whether the plan of operations was well concerted or not, he had assented to it. That plan was, that the allies should open a communication with the Isle of Leon, by breaking through the left of the enemy's line; this being done, they would receive supplies and reinforcements, and might proceed to farther successes. It had never been intended in this plan that the British should turn back to attack a part of the French army, whose numbers were, to their own, in the proportion of two to one, and who had every advantage of ground; nor that they should cripple themselves by fighting upon ground, where mere honour was all that could be gained. The memorial which Lapeña addressed to the Cortes, praying for an inquiry into his conduct, contains his justification. "He had assured General Graham," he says, "on the evening after the battle, that the troops from the isle should come out, and that provisions should be sent to the English; and it was with extreme surprise he learned that they had retreated without his knowledge." The cause of this movement is perfectly explicable; the Spaniards in Cadiz and the island, never very alert in their movements, were not ready with an immediate supply of provisions, and the British troops after the battle were neither in a humour, nor in a state, nor in a situation to wait patiently till it should arrive. From this moment all co-operation was at an end. When the Spanish general applied to his own Government, and to General Graham, respecting farther operations, the former told him that they had written to the British ambassador, and were waiting for his answer; the latter that he was not in a condition to come out of the isle again, but that he would cover the points of the line of defence. Lapeña thus found himself deprived of that part of the allied force upon whose skill and discipline his best hopes of success must have

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CHAP. been founded ; “ had he acted for himself,” he said, “ he would
 XXXVI. have pursued the enemy with the Spanish troops alone, but he
 1811. was under the necessity of consulting the government which was
 so close at hand.” This alone would have occasioned delay ;
 but Lapeña was at that moment under a charge of misconduct
 preferred against him by the British, and echoed by the people
 and the Cortes ; and thus in delays, formalities, and examina-
 tions, the irrecoverable hours were lost.

*Death of Al-
 burquerque.*

It must have added to the grief of the true Spaniards in Cadiz upon this occasion, when they remembered that they might at this day have had a general who had every claim to the confidence of his men, his government, and his allies, that distinguished services, unbounded sacrifices, enterprise, talents, and devoted patriotism could give. That general, the Duque de Alburquerque, whose name will ever be regarded as the most illustrious of his illustrious line, had just at this time fallen a victim to the malignity of the Junta of Cadiz. After remaining in England eight months in a state of exile, intolerable to one who was as capable as he was desirous of serving his country in the field, he printed a statement of his conduct and case, which he had withheld as long as any possible injury could be apprehended from its publication. This he sent to the Cortes ; it was received as the merits of its author deserved ; eulogiums never more justly merited were heard from all sides ; the Cortes declared that the duke and his army had deserved well of their country, particularly for preserving the Isle of Leon and Cadiz, and they desired that the Regency would recall him from England that he might again be actively employed. In consequence of this, he was appointed to the command in Galicia. The Junta of Cadiz however, acting as they had done in other cases, even of greater importance, in contempt of the Government, drew up a reply to his statement ; it was addressed to the