

would have been the preferable points of attack, had time permitted; and means as well as time were wanting. The plan which was adopted therefore as the only one in these circumstances feasible, was to breach and assault Fort Christoval, and having reduced it, to attack the castle from thence; three or four days battering might, it was thought, form a practicable breach in the castle wall, which on that side was entirely exposed, as well as apparently weak, and if the castle were carried, Badajoz could make no farther resistance.

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During the night of the 23d, the Guadiana rose nearly eight feet and a half in the course of twelve hours; the bridge which had been thrown across it at Jurumenha since the army passed was swept away, and the whole of its materials carried down the stream and lost. The communication was restored by another bridge of casks at the end of the month; but Lord Wellington seeing the danger of such a river in the rear of the army, immediately changed the cantonment of the troops, and directed Beresford to occupy and rest his rear upon Merida, where the old Roman bridge rendered his passage at any time sure. No sooner had these instructions been given, than he was recalled to Beira by intelligence that Massena was approaching the Agueda in force, and seemed to threaten an attempt for the relief of Almeida.

*Bridge at  
Jurumenha  
swept away.*

*Lord Wel-  
lington re-  
called to  
Beira.*

It was owing in great measure to the inactivity of the Spanish commander in Galicia, that Massena felt himself in safety as soon as he was out of Portugal, was enabled to rest the remains of his army, and to draw reinforcements from Castille, which enabled him to resume offensive operations, only fifteen days after the last of his troops had crossed the frontier in their retreat. The enemy had received great annoyance in Old Castille and Leon from D. Julian Sanchez, and other guerrilla parties, but none from the nominal army of Galicia, whose

*Inactivity  
of the Spa-  
nish com-  
mander in  
Galicia.*

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general, D. Nicolas Mahy, had suffered Massena's dépôts to be protected by from 5000 to 6000 men dispersed between Burgos and Ciudad Rodrigo. The Galicians cried out against him, complaining that, when he had filled the prisons with his own countrymen, he seemed to think any other operations unnecessary. He was displaced in consequence of their representations, and General Abadia appointed, (after Albuquerque's death,) to succeed him; but Abadia had lingered at Lisbon instead of hastening to take the command; Massena, as soon as the pursuit ceased upon the frontier, had no danger to apprehend from any other quarter, and his army was re-equipped and reinforced in no longer time than would have been necessary to recruit it after its fatigues. The Intruder having gone to Paris, the force which would otherwise have been required for his personal security was disposable for this service, so that, with the cavalry and artillery of the imperial guard, and the troops which were collected from Castille and Leon, he mustered not less than 40,000 effective infantry and 5000 horse. Lord Wellington had not supposed it possible that, after such a retreat, Massena could in so short a time have been at the head of such a force. He arrived at Villa Ferosa on the 28th, and at once perceived that a formidable attempt would be made for relieving Almeida: his own force consisted of 34,000 men, 2000 horse, including those who were engaged in the blockade.

*Country  
between the  
Agueda and  
Coa.*

The country between the Agueda and the Coa is a high open tract, which falls in a gradual slope from the mountains on the south in which those rivers have their sources, to the Douro: here and there are woods of cork and ilex, and the whole tract is intersected and divided into ridges by streams which run parallel to the larger rivers during the greater part of their course, and fall most of them into the Agueda. An army advancing into Portugal might, by moving upon the ridge of

Fuentes Guinaldo, turn the right of all the positions that can be taken upon these smaller streams; or if it advanced in a direct line, the parallel ridges and woods covering any movement without interrupting it, would favour it in manœuvring and directing its principal strength against either flank. The allies were cantoned along the Duas Casas, and toward the sources of the Azava, the light division being at Gallegos and Espeja, upon the latter. But the ridge between the Duas Casas and the Turon offered the most advantageous position, because on the left it was of difficult access in front, and on the right it connected with the high country about Navedeaver, from whence the communications were easy in the direction of Alfayates and Sabugal.

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Before Massena took the field, he addressed his troops in another bootless boast. “Soldiers of the army of Portugal,” said he in his general orders, “after six months of glorious and tranquil operations, you have returned to the first scene of your triumphs; but the enemies of Napoleon the Great have the audacity to blockade a fortress which they dared not previously attempt to defend. Soldiers, if your valour then intimidated their columns, will it not now punish them for their temerity? Will not you bring to their recollection, that you are still the same brave men who drove them to their trenches at Lisbon? Some regiments of cavalry, and reinforcements from his majesty’s guards, conducted by the marshal of the district, assist in your efforts and your duties. Forget not that it is your courage which must maintain that superiority of heroism and intrepidity which forms the subject of the admiration and the envy of other nations. Through you, the honour of the French armies will render renowned the hitherto unknown banks of the Coa, as you have made the rivers of Italy and of the North for ever memorable. Soldiers, a victory is necessary, in order to pro-

*Massena's  
address to  
his army.*

CHAP. cure you that repose which the equipment and administration  
 XXXVII. of the regiments require. You will obtain it; and you will pre-  
 1811. pare yourselves in the leisure that will result from it of marching  
 to new triumphs.”

*May.*

*Battle of  
 Fuentes  
 d'Onoro.*

*May 3.*

At day-break on the 2d of May the main body of the French crossed the Agueda at Ciudad Rodrigo, and moved in two columns toward the Azava, which they crossed that evening; our light division fell back from its cantonments on that river, the enemy being very superior in cavalry, and the horses of the allies in bad condition, by reason of hard service and wretched fodder: so great, indeed, was the want of food for them, that it had been necessary to cut the green rye, to the harvest of which the unfortunate peasants had looked for their next year's subsistence. On the following morning the French continued to advance, two columns moving towards Alameda and Fort Conception, and one, with the whole of the cavalry, upon Fuentes d'Onoro, a little village upon the Duas Casas. Lord Wellington had assembled his first, third, and seventh divisions on the heights, between that river and the Turon, in front of Villa Ferrosa: the 3d was posted on a ridge crossing the road from that townlet to Fuentes d'Onoro, which village was occupied by its light companies, and by three companies of the 5th battalion of the 60th under Lieutenant-Colonel Williams: the first division was formed on the right of the third, and the seventh moved from Navedeaver towards the first, throwing out flanking parties toward Poço Velho. This division incurred some danger in the movement: they were in the wood of Poço Velho, and the enemy's cavalry got in their rear; but though they had ground to pass on which cavalry could act, they made good their retreat, notwithstanding the superiority of the French in that arm. Major-General Campbell, with the sixth, observed the bridge over the Duas Casas at Alameda, and Sir W. Erskine the passages

of the same stream at Fort Conception and Aldea do Bispo. CHAP.  
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 Brigadier-General Pack, with his brigade of Portugueze and 1811.  
 the Queen's regiment from the sixth division, kept up the block- May.  
 ade of Almeida; and Julian Sanchez occupied Navedeaver with  
 his little party of horse and foot, . . . men more experienced in  
 desultory warfare than in regular battles, but of approved  
 courage. The extent of this position was not less than six miles  
 from flank to flank, the left being supported by the ruins of  
 Fort Conception, the right at Navedeaver: the village of  
 Fuentes d'Onoro was in the right of the centre, close to the  
 Duas Casas, situated on a slope, and concealed by the ground:  
 a great part of the line from that village to the ruined fort was  
 in a certain degree secured by the rocky and intricate channel  
 of the Duas Casas, and its steep and rugged bank on the side  
 of the allies, . . . the passage being very difficult for cavalry and  
 artillery, and defensible by a comparatively small force: on the  
 other side the position was not so strong, being nearly on a flat,  
 save that there was a small eminence with a tower on its summit,  
 on which the right rested. Head-quarters were at Villa Fer-  
 mosa, behind the Turon, about two miles from Fuentes d'Onoro.  
 The heights which the troops occupied are of a very gradual  
 ascent, accessible to cavalry in every part, except here and there,  
 where there are masses of rock. The ground upon which the  
 French formed was a plain, with woods behind it; and immedi-  
 ately in the neighbourhood of Fuentes d'Onoro there were groves  
 of ilex on the right bank of the Duas Casas, which they occu-  
 pied in force throughout.

The position which Lord Wellington had taken appeared to  
 Massena a fine line of battle, but he thought it was not without  
 danger to the troops that held it; for they had the wild Coa  
 behind them, and only a single carriage communication, in  
 itself sufficiently difficult, by the little town of Castello Bom.

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*May 3.*

This communication it was his intention to seize ; and for that purpose, while with a part of his army he kept the centre of the allies in check, he proceeded in force against their right, and endeavoured to obtain possession of Fuentes d'Onoro. Having brought up his artillery, he commenced the attack at two in the afternoon, by a cannonade upon the village, under cover of which fire a strong column of infantry moved against it. Lord Wellington perceived his intention, and reinforced the village as occasion required with the 71st, the 79th, and the second battalion of the 24th. Lieutenant-Colonel Williams was wounded, and the command then devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron of the 79th. Repeated and vigorous efforts were made against this post ; and the enemy at one time obtained possession of it in part, but they were driven out before night put a stop to the action.

*May 4.*

The French did not renew the attack on the following day, but confined themselves to reconnoitring the British position, particularly the right, toward which they moved part of their troops, chiefly cavalry, in the direction of Navedeaver, Massena thinking that he had found accessible ground between that village and Poço Velho. Lord Wellington, from the course of his reconnoissance, inferred what was his purpose, and in the evening moved the 7th division, under Major-General Houston, to protect, if possible, the passage of the Duas Casas at Poço Velho, where the enemy intended to cross in hopes of gaining possession of Fuentes d'Onoro from that side, and of the ground behind the village. As soon as it was daylight on the 5th, this

*May 5.*

intention on their part became evident. The allied cavalry was then moved to the left of the 7th division, somewhat more forward ; the light division was in march from Alameda towards the same station ; the 3d had bivouacked in a line parallel to the ridge of the hill toward Fuentes d'Onoro ; and the 1st upon

its right: these divisions were connected with each other, and the village was occupied by part of the troops of both, both being ready to support it. There was a distance of about one mile from the right of the 1st division to the ground on which the light division had arrived, and about half a mile from thence to the 7th; the cavalry covered this last interval; the former was protected by piquets and light infantry in the wood between Fuentes d'Onoro and Poço Velho. This would have been a critical situation for a commander less reasonably confident in himself and in his troops. There was no appui for the right of the British army, and it had the Coa in its rear with only one passage for artillery. The French were superior in numbers, and what was of far greater importance here, greatly so in cavalry: their horses were fresh, whereas ours had been of necessity overworked and insufficiently fed: moreover, the ground favoured their preparations for attack, a large extent of wood within little more than a mile of the British line concealing their movements.

Early in the morning one of the enemy's corps appeared in two columns in the valley of the Duas Casas, opposite Poço Velho, having the whole of their cavalry under General Montbrun on the left. The infantry directed itself against the village; the cavalry moved through the open country between it and Navedeaver, a part circling about, under favour of the ground, to turn the right flank of the allies. Julian Sanchez was compelled to retire; and so, with some loss, were two battalions of the 7th division from Poço Velho. Houston moved with that division to protect their retreat and that of the cavalry, with which view he placed himself on a rocky height, and there formed the Chasseurs Britanniques. The first attack of their advanced cavalry was met by a few squadrons of British, who obtained a partial advantage, and took a colonel and some other

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prisoners; but their eagerness, and still more their inferiority, occasioned some confusion: they were in their turn pressed, and the enemy for a short time had possession of two guns belonging to our horse-artillery. The main body of the French cavalry advanced rapidly, charged through the piquets of the 85th, and followed our horse up the hill: but the attack thus gallantly begun was not maintained with equal gallantry. The ground was intersected with stone walls, which protected part of our troops; those who had not that advantage stood firm. The chasseurs under Lieutenant-Colonel Eustace, and a detachment of the Brunswick corps, were somewhat concealed by a rising ground, where in many parts the rocks stood several feet above the surface: availing themselves of this, they waited till the main body of the enemy's cavalry came in a line with their front, within threescore paces, and then rising up threw in a well-directed volley, which checked them and made them retire in disorder; yet the charge had appeared so formidable, that, it is said, Lord Wellington feared the Brunswickers were lost. Their loss was trifling; but they narrowly escaped afterward from the Portugueze, who, because of their caps, mistook them for enemies. The attack was renewed, but in vain, though some of the French dismounted and acted as light infantry to assist in it.

Lord Wellington had occupied Poço Velho and the adjoining ground for the sake of maintaining his communication across the Coa by Sabugal, while he provided at the same time for maintaining the blockade of Almeida. The danger of attempting both was now evident, and looking with just confidence rather to victory than to any likelihood of retreating, he drew in the right of the army. Placing, therefore, the light division in reserve in the rear of the left of the 1st, he ordered the 7th to cross the Turon and take post on some commanding



ground, which protected the right flank and rear of the 1st, covered the communication with the Coa on that side, and prevented that of the enemy with Almeida by the roads between the Coa and the Turon. The 7th division thus covered the rear of the right, which was formed by the 1st in two lines. Colonel Ashworth's brigade, in two lines, was in the centre, and the 3d division, in two lines also, on the left. D. Julian's infantry joined the 7th in Fresneda; his horse were sent to interrupt the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo. Fuentes d'Onoro was in front of the left. The right of the French infantry was opposite that village, the left and centre between it and Poço Velho, in the wood, and within 2000 yards of the British position. A part of their cavalry was on the right flank of their right; a few squadrons were with artillery opposite the 1st division, and the main body was in the open country, from whence the right wing of the allies had withdrawn.

The great object of the enemy now was to gain possession of Fuentes d'Onoro, which was defended by the 24th, 71st, and 78th; and these regiments were supported by the light infantry battalions of the 1st and 3d divisions, and some Portuguese corps. They directed against this post several columns of their infantry supported by artillery; succeeded in turning it by the wood toward Poço Velho; gained possession by superior numbers of the point of land where the chain of piquets passed, and from thence penetrated into the village. They even advanced some little way on the road toward Villa Ferosa: but ere the 21st Portuguese regiment checked them; the 74th and 78th were detached by General Picton, charged them, and retook the village. Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron was mortally wounded, by an enemy who stepped out of the ranks to aim at him. His countrymen, the Highlanders, at whose head he fell, set up a shriek, and attacked the French with a

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