

CHAP. spirit not to be resisted: the man who had slain their com-
 XXXVII. mander was pierced by many bayonets at once: the leader of
 1811. the French, a person remarkable for his stature and fine form,
 May 5. was killed, and the Highlanders in their vengeance drove the
 enemy before them. More than once Fuentes d'Onoro was won
 and lost; the contest in the streets was so severe that several of
 the openings were blocked up with the dead and the wounded,
 but they were finally driven through it by Colonel Mackinnon:
 they kept up a fire upon it till night closed, at which time 400
 of their dead were lying there. The command of the village
 devolved upon Lieutenant-Colonel Cadogan.

Meantime, the enemy from the wood in front of the British
 line brought fifteen pieces of cannon to bear upon it, and with
 those above the village established a severe cross fire, under
 cover of which, a column of infantry attempted to penetrate
 down the ravine of the Turon, to the right of the 1st division: but
 they were repulsed by the light infantry of the guards, and some
 companies of the 95th. Their cavalry also charged and cut
 through the piquets of the guards, but were checked by the
 fire of the 42d. During the night and the succeeding day,
 Lord Wellington strengthened his position by throwing up
 breast-works and batteries; and this, after the lesson he had
 received, deterred Massena from attempting any farther attack.
 He made no movement till the 8th, nor did Lord Wellington
 provoke an action: he had succeeded in keeping his ground,
 and thereby maintaining the blockade; and nothing was to be
 gained by attempting more with inferior numbers, and a weak
 and exhausted cavalry. On the 8th and 9th, the French col-
 lected their whole army in the woods between the Duas Casas
 and the Azava, recrossed the latter river on the evening of the
 9th, and retired the next day across the Agueda, having failed
 entirely in the object for which the movement had been under-

*The French
 retire.*

taken, and the battle fought. The loss of the allies on both days amounted to 1378 killed and wounded, 317 prisoners. That of the French was not ascertained: they acknowledged only 400: but that number was counted in the village of Fuentes d'Onoro, and 500 of their horses were left dead on the field. Under the government of Buonaparte, truth was never to be found in any public statement, unless it was favourable to himself; and none of his generals exercised to a greater extent than M. Massena the license which all took of representing their defeats as victories. This action had severely mortified that general; he had been beaten by an army numerically inferior to his own, and weak in cavalry, upon ground which was favourable for that arm, and which Lord Wellington would not have chosen, had circumstances permitted a choice; it was an action in which the skill and promptitude of the British commander, and the gallantry and steadiness of the allied troops, had been evinced throughout.

Defeated in the field, and disappointed in his intention of saving Almeida, Massena sent orders to the Governor, General Brenier, to blow up the works, and retire with the garrison upon Barba de Puerco. Brenier having previously received instructions from Bessieres and from Berthier to prepare for thus evacuating the place, should it be necessary, had made 140 cavities ready to be charged before the end of April; but knowing that Massena would make every effort to retain possession of this fortress, which was the only fruit of his six months campaign in Portugal, he had prepared also for a vigorous defence, hoping to hold out till the first of June. The battle of Fuentes d'Onoro put an end to his hopes; for the firing was heard in Almeida, and proved that it was a serious action; and as the communication which he every moment expected did not

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the garrison
from Al-
meida.*

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 XXXVII. sena's orders reached him on the 7th. Immediately the cavities
 1811. were filled, the balls and cartridges thrown into the ditch, and
 May. the artillery destroyed by discharging cannon into the mouths of
 the pieces. Two days were thus employed; on the morning of
 the 10th he assembled the officers, and having read to them his
 instructions, told them, that when the place was once demolished,
 the intentions of their sovereign would be perfectly fulfilled;
 that that single object ought to animate them; that they were
 Frenchmen, and must now prove to the universe that they were
 worthy of being so. They continued to work in destroying
 stores and artillery, and completing the mines, till the moment
 of their departure; and at ten at night, all being assembled with
 the greatest silence, Brenier gave as a watch-word, Buonaparte
 and Bayard, and set off (in his own words) under the auspices
 of glory and honour. In coupling these names, he seems not to
 have felt how cutting a reproach they conveyed to every honour-
 able Frenchman.

About one, the mines exploded; at the same time the gar-
 rison attacked the piquets which observed the place, and
 forced their way through them. They marched in two columns,
 fired as little as possible, and passed between the bodies of
 troops which had been posted to support the piquets. Brenier
 had studied the ground so well that he would not take a guide;
 a guide, he thought, would only make him hesitate and perhaps
 confuse him; the moon served as his compass, the different
 brooks and rivers which he crossed were so many points which
 insured his direction, and he placed his baggage at the tail of each
 column, in order that it might serve as a lure to the enemy, for
 to save it he knew was impossible. On the part of the block-
 ading troops there was a culpable negligence; for as the garrison

had frequently attacked the nearest piquets, and fired cannon in the night during the whole blockade, but more particularly while Massena was between the Duas Casas and the Azava, they thought this attack was nothing more than one of the ordinary sallies, and did not even move at the sound of the explosion, till its cause was ascertained. General Pack, however, who was at Malpartida, joined the piquets upon the first alarm with his wonted alacrity, and continued to follow and fire upon the enemy, as a guide for the march of the other troops. The 4th regiment, which was ordered to occupy Barba del Puerco, missed the way, and to this Brenier was chiefly indebted for his escape. Regnier was at the bridge of San Felices to receive him, and there he effected his junction, having lost, in this hazardous and well-executed escape, by the French official account, only sixty men. But the loss had been tenfold of what was there stated. For though the lure of the baggage was not thrown out in vain, and too many of his pursuers stopped or turned aside to secure their booty when the horses and mules were cast loose, he was followed and fired upon by General Pack's party, and by a part of the 36th regiment, the whole way to the Agueda, 490 of his men were brought in prisoners, and the number of killed and wounded could not have been inconsiderable.

The English and their general did full justice to the ability with which Brenier performed his difficult attempt. Massena made use of it to colour over his defeat, and represented the evacuation and not the relief of Almeida as the object for which the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro was fought. "The operation," he said, "which had put the army in motion was thus terminated." Shortly afterwards he returned to France, with Ney, Junot, and Loison, leaving behind them names, ever to be execrated in Portugal, and to be held in everlasting infamy. Marmont succeeded him in the command. The army, which

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Lord Wel-
lington re-
called to
Alentejo.

still called itself the army of Portugal, went into its cantonments upon the Tormes, having, in Massena's curious language, *advanced* into Spain that it might rest; and Lord Wellington set out for the south, summoned by intelligence from Marshal Beresford that Soult, notwithstanding previous rumours, which described him as fortifying Seville, and preparing to stand on the defensive in Andalusia, was advancing into Extremadura. These tidings reached him on the night of the 15th; and he set out on the following morning.

Badajoz be-
sieged.

When the British commander had been recalled from Badajoz to secure the recovery of Almeida, Beresford was left waiting till the Guadiana should fall sufficiently for him to re-establish the bridge. The French under Latour Maubourg, when they had been forced to retire from Llerena, fell back to Guadalcañal; it was of importance to push them as far off as possible during the intended siege; and a combined movement of Colonel Colborne, Ballasteros, and the Conde de Penne Villamur, who commanded the cavalry of the Spanish army in Extremadura, made them, though far superior in force, retire to Constantino. This service having been performed, the investment of Badajoz was commenced on the 4th of May. But the enterprise was undertaken under every possible disadvantage. For Marshal Beresford had not force enough to carry on the siege, and at the same time hold a position which should cover it from interruption. He was as inadequately supplied with other means as with men: ample stores, indeed, had been ordered from Lisbon to Elvas, and on the part of the governor at Elvas, General Leite, nothing was wanting which his zeal and activity could effect: but these could do little in an exhausted country, where carriage was not to be procured, and all that could be brought up was miserably insufficient. At that time also, the French were perfectly skilled both in the attack and defence of

fortified places, while we had every thing to learn: there was not even a corps of sappers and miners attached to the army, so that all those preliminary operations to which men may be trained at home, at leisure, and in perfect safety, were here to be learnt under the fire of an enemy as well skilled in all the arts of defence as we were deficient in those of attack. In this branch of war they were as superior to us as our troops were uniformly found to theirs in the field; and it is a superiority against which courage, though carried to the highest point, can be of no avail. On the part of the besieged, courage and the high sense of duty may suffice, though outworks have fallen, walls are weak, and science wanting: this had been proved at Zaragoza and Gerona. But it is one thing to assail ramparts, and another to defend them; and the braver the assailants, the greater must be their loss, if they are not directed by the necessary skill.

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On the 8th the investment of the town on the northern side was effected, and that same evening the siege commenced. The soil was hard and rocky; the men unaccustomed to such work and not numerous enough for it, for which causes, and the want also of intrenching tools, a sufficient extent of ground could not be opened the first night. The enemy, who allowed no opportunity to escape them, took advantage of this, made a sortie on the morning of the 10th, gained possession of a battery, and when driven back were pursued with such rash ardour to the very walls of Fort Christoval and the *tête-de-pont*, that the besiegers lost more than 400 men. A breaching battery, armed with three guns and two howitzers, was completed during the next night, and on the morrow the garrison's well directed fire disabled one of the howitzers and all the guns. That same day intelligence was received from the Regent, General Blake, that Soult had left Seville with the declared intention of relieving

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tion of the
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Badajoz, and that Latour Maubourg, returning upon Guadalcañal and Llerena, had forced Penne Villamur to fall back. Orders therefore were given to hold every man in readiness to retire. But other accounts, on the 12th, seemed to make it probable that Soult's movements were only intended against Blake, who had come to Fregenal, and against Ballasteros, who from Monasterio had pushed his advances toward Seville; and on that probability Beresford ordered ground to be broken against the castle. Fresh dispatches in the middle of the night from various quarters made it beyond all doubt that Soult was rapidly advancing; immediate orders, therefore, were given to raise the siege, for Beresford deemed it better to meet the French marshal, and give him battle with all the force that could be collected, Spanish, Portugueze, and British, than by looking at two objects to risk the loss of one. General Cole's division was left with some 2000 Spaniards to cover the removal of the guns and stores; and Beresford met Blake and Castaños at Valverde on the 14th. Any jealousy which might have arisen concerning the command had been obviated by a previous arrangement between Castaños and Lord Wellington. The latter, in a written memorial concerning the operations which ought to be pursued in Extremadura, had proposed that whenever different corps of the allied armies should be united to give battle, the general who was possessed of the highest military rank, and of the longest standing, should take the command of the whole. This would have given it to Castaños; but he, with that wise and disinterested spirit which always distinguished him, proposed, as a more equitable arrangement, that the general who had the greatest force under his orders should have the chief command, and that the others should be considered as auxiliaries. Lord Wellington perfectly approved of the alteration. "It was my duty," said he, "in a

Arrangement between Lord Wellington and Castaños concerning the command.

point so delicate as that of the allied troops acting in concert, to submit a proposition so reasonable in itself as to obtain universal assent; but it was becoming the manly understanding, candour, and knowledge of existing circumstances which characterise your excellency to make an alteration in it, substituting another proposal better calculated to please those of the allies who have most to lose in the battle, for which we must prepare ourselves."

Lord Wellington had left it at Beresford's discretion to fight a battle or retire, if circumstances should render one or other alternative necessary. But the effect of a retreat would, as he saw, have been most disastrous: it would have deprived the Spaniards of all hope for any efficient exertion on the part of Great Britain; it would have exposed Blake and Castaños to destruction; the British army would have suffered a second time in reputation; the Portuguese troops would have lost their confidence in their allies and in themselves; and in the retreat itself, . . . with an army so dispirited, through an exhausted country, and before such troops as the French under such a commander, . . . the numerical loss might have been greater than in a well fought though unsuccessful engagement, and the consequences worse.

Our cavalry, with that of Castaños, under the Conde de Penne Villamur, falling back as the enemy advanced, was joined at Santa Martha by Blake's. The British and Portuguese infantry, except the division which was left to cover the removal of the stores to Elvas, occupied a position in front of Valverde; but as this, though stronger than any which could be taken up elsewhere in those parts, would have left Badajoz entirely open, Beresford determined to take up such as he could get directly between that city and the enemy. He therefore assembled his force on the 15th at the village of Albuhera,

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tle to the
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where the roads meet which lead to Badajoz and to Jurumenha by Valverde and Olivença. A little above the village a brook called Ferdia falls into the Albuhera, one of the lesser tributary streams of the Guadiana; between these rivulets, and beyond them, is one of the open and scattered woods of ilex, which are common in this part of the country. There is a bridge over the Albuhera in front of the village. The village had been so completely destroyed by the enemy, that there was not an inhabitant in it, nor one house with a roof standing. The cavalry which had been forced in the morning to retire from Santa Martha joined here, and in the afternoon the enemy appeared. Blake's corps making a forced march, arrived during the night; Cole with his division, and the Spanish brigade under D. Carlos d'España, not till the following morning. The 15th had been a day of heavy rain; and both these divisions, from forced marches, and the latter also from fatigue in dismantling the works before Badajoz, were not in the best state for action.

The whole face of this country is passable every where for horse and foot; Beresford formed his army in two lines nearly parallel to the Albuhera, and on the ridge of the gradual ascent from its banks, covering the roads to Badajoz and Valverde; Blake's corps was on the right in two lines; its left on the Valverde road joined the right of Major-General Stewart's division, the left of which reached the Badajoz road, and there Major-General Hamilton's division closed the left of the line. Cole's division, with one brigade of Hamilton's, formed the second line. The allied force consisted of 8000 British, 7000 Portuguese, and 10,000 Spaniards; hardly two thousand of these were cavalry. Soult had drawn troops from the armies of Victor and Sebastiani, and left Seville with 16,000 men; Latour Maubourg joined him with five or six thousand; but he had a very superior cavalry, not less than 4000, and his artillery also