

soldier-like fidelity, were miserably sacrificed, nearly the whole of this party being killed before the order for recalling them arrived.

CHAP.
XLIV.

1813.

July.

Meantime Lieutenant Jones of the engineers, with an officer and nine men of the first royals, gained the top of the great breach; and men were rushing up to follow them, when the enemy sprung a mine in one place, and in another drew the supports from under a false bridge, thus blowing up some of the assailants, and precipitating others upon the spikes which had been fixed below. The men who were at the foot of the breach were then panic-stricken; they, as well as the French, remembered that in such situations the victory is not to the brave or the strong, if superior skill is opposed to courage and strength: they ran back.. it was impossible to rally them, and they suffered much. The intention was, that another column should pass in the rear of the first, between it and the sea to the second breach, and storm it; but the discomfiture of the first party prevented this, and none of these reached their destination. The whole was over before morning had fairly opened, and in the course of an hour 45 officers and above 800 men were killed, wounded, or missing.

The river prevented any immediate communication, so that at the batteries it was thought that hardly any thing more than a false alarm had taken place, till, as day dawned, they discovered through their glasses the bodies of officers and men in the breach, and under the demi-bastion and retaining wall. Presently one or two of the enemy appeared on the breach, and a serjeant came down among the wounded, raising some, and speaking to others. The firing which had been continued occasionally on the breach was then stopped; more of the French appeared; a kind of parley took place between them and the men at the head of the trenches; and half an hour's truce was agreed on for the purpose of removing the wounded and the



CHAP.
XLIV.

1813.

July.

dead ; but so jealous were the French that they would not allow the dead who were nearest them to be approached ; some of the wounded they carried into the town, and others were borne by their soldiers into the British lines. While the troops were yet under arms, not knowing whether another attack might be ordered, a British officer saw one of his Portugueze soldiers start off, and reproved him for so doing, when after a while the man returned ; but the Portugueze replied, scarcely able to command his voice or restrain his tears as he spake, that he had only been burying his comrade, . . and in fact it appeared that with no other implement than his bayonet and his hands, he had given his poor friend and countryman a soldier's burial in the sand. The officers who fell in this attack were buried together, each in a shell, in one grave, in a garden near the encampment.

*The siege
suspended.*

Lord Wellington came over from Lesaca on the same day about noon, and determined upon renewing the attack ; the second breach was to be completed, the demi-bastion thrown down, and fresh troops appointed for another assault. But the ammunition was now running low ; and upon his return that night he received intelligence of movements on the enemy's part in the Pyrenees, which made him forthwith dispatch orders for withdrawing the guns from the batteries and converting the siege into a blockade.

*Soult ap-
pointed
Command-
er-in-chief.*

Marshal Soult had been sent back from Germany as Lieutenant of the Emperor, and Commander-in-chief of the French armies in Spain. Of all the French generals employed in the Peninsula, he had obtained the highest reputation ; and undoubtedly no one could be better entitled to the praise of those authors who write history, with a mere military feeling, reckless of all higher considerations. That *impassibility* which he considered as one of the first essentials for a general in such a war, and of which proof had been given in his proclamations and his acts,

recommended him to Buonaparte not less than his great ability. The remains of the armies of Portugal, of the centre and of the north, were united; their ranks, which had so often been thinned, were filled by a new conscription; and the whole being re-formed into nine divisions of infantry, was called the army of Spain; the right, centre, and left, were under Generals Reille, Drouet, Comte d'Erlon, and Clausel; the reserve, under General Villatte: there were two divisions of dragoons under Generals Treillard and Tilly, and a light division under General Pierre Soult. In the expectation of success every exertion had been used to increase the strength of their cavalry, though of little use in the Pyrenees, that the war might be once more carried beyond the Ebro; and with the same view a large proportion of artillery was provided. The decree which appointed Marshal Soult bore date on the first of July; he took the command on the 13th, and his preparations were forwarded with the ability, activity, and hopefulness by which the French are characterized in such things. He issued an address to his troops, containing more truth than was usually admitted into a French state paper, because the truth in that place could not possibly be concealed; but it was sufficiently coloured with artful misrepresentations and with falsehood. "The armies of France," it said, "guided by the powerful and commanding genius of the Emperor Napoleon, had achieved in Germany a succession of victories as brilliant as any that adorned their annals. The presumptuous hopes of the enemy had thus been confounded; and the Emperor, who was always inclined to consult the welfare of his subjects, by following moderate counsels, had listened to the pacific overtures which the enemy made to him after their defeat. But in the interim, the English, who, under the pretence of succouring the inhabitants of the Peninsula, were in reality devoting them to ruin, had taken advantage of the opportunity afforded them. A

CHAP.
XLIV.

1813.

*July.**His address
to the troops.*

CHAP. skilful leader," said Marshal Soult, "might have discomfited
 XLIV. their motley levies; and who could doubt what would have been
 1813. the result of the day at Vittoria if the general had been worthy
 July. of his troops? Let us not however," he continued, "defraud
 the enemy of the praise which is their due. The dispositions
 and arrangements of their general have been prompt, skilful,
 and consecutive; and the valour and steadiness of his troops
 have been praiseworthy. Yet do not forget that it is to the
 benefit of your example they owe their present military character;
 and that whenever the relative duties of a French general and
 his troops have been ably fulfilled, their enemies have commonly
 had no other resource than in flight." In one part of this address
 Marshal Soult rendered justice to Lord Wellington; but this
 latter assertion strikingly exemplifies the character of the vain-
 glorious people whom he was addressing. He himself had been
 repulsed by a far inferior British force at Coruña; had been
 driven from Porto, and defeated in the bloody field of Albuhera.
 He was addressing men who had been beaten at Vimeiro, beaten
 at Talavera, beaten at Busaco, beaten at Fuentes d'Onoro,
 routed at Salamanca, and scattered like sheep at Vittoria.
 They had been driven from Lisbon into France; and yet the
 general who had so often been baffled addressed this language
 to the very troops who had been so often and so signally defeated!
 "The present situation of the army," he pursued, "is imputable
 to others: let the merit of repairing it be yours. I have borne
 testimony to the Emperor of your bravery and your zeal. His
 instructions are to drive the enemy from those heights which
 enable them arrogantly to survey our fertile valleys, and to chase
 them across the Ebro. It is on the Spanish soil that your tents
 must next be pitched, and your resources drawn. Let the
 account of our successes be dated from Vittoria, and the birth-
 day of the Emperor be celebrated in that city."

Lord Wellington's situation had not during the whole war been so critical as at this time. He had two blockades to maintain, and two points to cover, sixty miles distant from each other, in a mountainous country, where the heights were so impassable that there could be no lateral communication between his divisions. His force was necessarily divided in order that none of the passes might be left undefended, but the enemy could choose their point of attack, and bring their main force to bear upon it; thus they would have the advantage of numbers; and they had the farther advantage, that a considerable proportion of their troops, all who had belonged to the army of the north, had been accustomed to mountain-warfare, in which the British and Portuguese had had no experience.

Soult's first object was to relieve Pamplona, which could only be relieved by some such great effort as he intended; whereas S. Sebastian's, as long as the garrison could maintain themselves there, had always the possibility of receiving supplies along the coast. With this view he collected a convoy of provisions and stores at S. Jean de Pied-de-Port. Meantime the hostile forces, though each within their own frontier, were encamped in some places upon opposite heights, within half cannon-shot; and their sentries within 150 yards of each other. Hitherto with the Spaniards and Portuguese it had been, in the ever-memorable phrase of Palafox, war at the knife's edge; but that national contest, in which the aggressors had treated courtesy and humanity with as much contempt as justice, was at an end; it was a military contest now, and the two armies offered no molestation to each other in the intervals of the game of war. The French, gay and alert as usual, were drumming and trumpeting all day long; the more thoughtful English enjoying the season and the country, looking down with delight upon the sea and the enemy's territory, and Bayonne in the distance, and sketch-

CHAP.
XLIV.

1813.

July.
Critical situation of the allied army.

Soult's movements for the relief of Pamplona.

CHAP. XLIV.
 1813. *July.*

ing in the leisure which their duties might allow the beautiful scenery of the Pyrenees. The right of the allied army was at Roncesvalles, the sacred ground of romance, where in the seventeenth century a spot was shown as still reddened with the blood of the Paladins; and where Our Lady, under some one of her thousand and one appellations, may perhaps still continue to work miracles in the chapel wherein they were interred. From that pass, and from the pass of Maya, the roads converge on Pamplona; and Soult made his arrangements for attacking both on the same day in force, . . . for doing which he had the great advantage that Lord Wellington was at the opposite extremity of the line, near S. Sebastian's.

*Battles of
 the Py-
 renees.*

Accordingly, on the 24th, he assembled the right and left wings of his army, with one division of his centre, and two divisions of cavalry, at S. Jean de Pied-de-Port; and on the 25th (the same day that the unsuccessful assault upon S. Sebastian's was made) he began his operations, and in person, with about 35,000 men, attacked General Byng's post at Roncesvalles. Sir Lowry Cole moved up to his support with the 4th division; and they maintained their ground obstinately, against very superior numbers, though with considerable loss. But in the afternoon the enemy turned their position; and Sir Lowry deemed it necessary to withdraw in the night, and marched accordingly to Lizoain, in the neighbourhood of Zubiri. General Drouet, with 13,000 men, was to force the position of Maya: early in the morning he manœuvred against each of the four passes, and against the Conde de Amarante's division, which was posted on the right. Under cover of these demonstrations, he collected his main strength behind a hill immediately in front of the pass of Aretesque, and from thence about noon made a sudden and rapid advance, favoured by a most unexpected chance. Two advanced videttes, who had been posted on some high ground

to give timely notice of an enemy's approach, had fallen asleep during the heat of the day; the French were thus enabled to advance unseen, and the piquet had scarcely time to give the alarm before the enemy were upon them. The light infantry companies of the second brigade sustained the attack with great steadiness; when they were overpowered, the 34th and 50th regiments came up, and afterward the right wing of the 92d; for as the other passes were not to be left unguarded, troops could only be brought from them by successive battalions, as the need became more urgent. Opposed as they thus were to very superior forces, the 32d lost more than a third of its numbers, and the 92d battalion was almost destroyed. The allies retired slowly, defending every point, as succours enabled them to make a stand, but still over-matched; till, about six in the evening, Major-General Barnes's brigade of the 7th division came to their support; then they recovered that part of their post which was the key of the position, and might have re-assumed their ground; but Sir Rowland, having been apprized that Sir Lowry Cole must retire, deemed it necessary to withdraw them during the night to Irurita. They had been engaged seven hours, and lost four guns and more than sixteen hundred men.

During the whole of the following day, the enemy remained inactive beyond the Puerto de Maya. On that day Sir Thomas Picton, who, as soon as he was informed of Soult's movements, had crossed to Zubiri with his division, moved forward to support the troops at Lizoain, and assumed the command there as senior officer. The enemy's whole force advanced against them early in the afternoon, and they retired skirmishing to some strong ground, which they maintained, in order of battle, till night closed. Generals Picton and Cole concurred then in opinion that the post of Zubiri would not be tenable for so long

CHAP.
XLIV.

1813.

July.

CHAP. a time, as it would be necessary for them to wait there. Early
 XLIV. on the 27th, therefore, they began to retreat still farther, and
 1813. took up a position to cover the blockade of Pamplona. The
 July. garrison of that fortress had been informed by some deserters
 from the Walloon guards that Soult, with a powerful army, was
 advancing victoriously to their relief, and that relief was certain.
 Their hopes were raised to the highest pitch; the firing was
 only five miles distant. The state of things appeared so critical
 to Abisbal, that he prepared to raise the blockade, and spiked
 some of his guns; and the enemy sallied, got possession of
 several batteries, and took fourteen pieces of cannon, before
 Don Carlos d'España could repulse them. The position which
 the retreating troops took to cover the blockade had its right in
 front of the village of Huarte, extending to the hills beyond
 Olaz, and its left on the heights in front of the village of
 Villalba, the right of this wing resting on a height which covered
 the road from Zubiri and Roncesvalles, and the left at a chapel
 behind Sorrauren, on the road from Ostiz. Morillo's division
 of Spanish infantry was in reserve, with that part of Abisbal's
 corps which was not engaged in the blockade; and from the
 latter two regiments were detached to occupy part of the hill by
 which the road from Zubiri was defended. The British cavalry
 under Sir Stapleton Cotton were placed on the right, near
 Huarte, being the only ground on which cavalry could act.
 The river Lanz runs in the valley which was on the left of the
 allies, and on the right of the French, in the road to Ostiz.
 Beyond this river is a range of mountains connected with
 Ligasso and Marcalain, by which places it was now necessary
 to communicate with the rest of the army.

Lord Wellington arrived as these divisions were taking up
 their ground; and shortly afterwards Soult formed his army on
 a mountain between the Ostiz and the Zubiri roads, the front

of the mountain extending from one road to the other. One division he placed on a bold height to the left of the Zubiri road, and in some villages in front of the third division, where he had also a large body of cavalry. The same evening he pushed forward a corps to take possession of a steep hill on the right of General Cole's division: it was occupied by a Portuguese battalion and a Spanish regiment; these troops defended their post with the bayonet, and drove the enemy back. Seeing the importance of this point, Lord Wellington reinforced it with the 40th and with another Spanish regiment, so that the further efforts of the French there were as unsuccessful as the first; but they took possession of Sorauren, on the Ostiz road, whereby they acquired the communication by that road; and they kept up a fire of musketry along the line till it was dark.

In the morning, General Pack's division arrived. Lord Wellington then directed that the heights on the left of the valley of the Lanz should be occupied, and that this division should form across the valley in rear of the left of General Cole's, resting its right on Oricain, and its left upon the heights. They had scarcely taken the position in the valley, when they were attacked in great force from Sorauren: the enemy advanced steadily to the attack; but the front was defended from the heights on their left by their own light troops, and from the height on the right, and on the rear, by the 4th division and a Portuguese brigade; and the French were soon driven back, with great loss, by the fire in their front, both flanks, and rear. This was a false move from which Soult never recovered: with a view of extricating his troops from the situation in which they were now placed, he attacked the height on which the left of the 4th division stood, and where the 7th *Caçadores* were posted, at an *ermida* or chapel behind Sorauren. Momentary possession was obtained of it; but the *Caçadores* returned to

CHAP.
XLIV.
1813.
July.