

CHAP. XLIV.  
 1813.  
 July.

their ground, supported by Major-General Ross at the head of his brigade, and the enemy were driven down. The battle now became general along the whole of these heights, but only in one point to the advantage of the French, which was where a battalion of Major-General Campbell's Portugueze regiment was posted; that battalion was overpowered, it gave way immediately on the right of Ross's brigade: the French then established themselves on the line of the allies, and Ross was obliged to withdraw from his post. Upon this, Lord Wellington ordered the 27th and 48th to charge first that body of the enemy which had established itself there, and then those on the left. Both charges succeeded; the enemy were driven back: the 6th division at the same time moved forward nearer to the left of the 4th; the attack upon this front then ceased entirely, and was but faintly continued on other points of the line. Every regiment in the 4th division charged with the bayonet that day, and the 40th, 7th, 20th, and 23d, four different times. Their officers set them the example, and Major-General Ross had two horses shot under him. The events of that day abated Marshal Soult's confidence, and made him feel how little he could expect to succeed against such troops and such a commander. He no longer thought of dating his report of the operations from Vittoria, and celebrating the Emperor Napoleon's birthday in that city; and he sent back his guns, his wounded, and great part of his baggage, to S. Jean de Pied-de-Port, while they could be sent in safety.

On the 29th both armies remained quiet in their positions, each expecting the result of its combinations. Sir Rowland had been ordered to march upon Lizasso by Lanz, and the Earl of Dalhousie from San Esteban upon the same place; both arrived there on the 28th, and Lord Dalhousie's division came to Marcalain, thus assuring Sir Rowland's communication



with the main body. Marshal Soult's manœuvres were now baffled, for the allies were become one army; but he saw one chance for victory still remaining, and he was not a man to let any opportunity escape him. Drouet's corps, before which Sir Rowland had retired, followed his march, and arrived at Ostiz on the 29th. Thus the French force also became one army. The Marshal thought his position between the Arga and Lanz was by nature so exceedingly strong, and so little liable to attack, that he might without apprehension withdraw from it the bulk of his troops. Occupying, therefore, still the same points, but drawing on to his left the troops which were on the heights opposite the third division, he reinforced Drouet with one division, and during the night of the 29th occupied in strength the crest of the mountain opposite to the 6th and 7th divisions, thus connecting his right in its position with the force which had been detached to attack Sir Rowland, his object being thus to open the Tolosa road, turn the left of the allies, and relieve St. Sebastian's, now that he had failed in the attempt for the relief of Pamplona.

On the morning of the 30th his troops were observed to move in great numbers toward the mountains on the right of the Lanz, with what intent Lord Wellington at once perceived, and determined to attack the French position in front. He ordered Lord Dalhousie to possess himself of the top of the mountain opposite him and turn their right, and Sir Thomas Picton to cross the heights from which the French division had been withdrawn, and from the Roncesvalles road turn their left, and he made his arrangements for attacking them in front, as soon as the effect of these movements on both flanks should appear. In every point these intentions were effected. Lord Dalhousie with General Inglis's brigade drove them from the mountains: Major-General Pakenham who had the command of the 6th division, Major-General Pack having been wounded, then

CHAP.  
XLIV.

1813.

*July.*



CHAP. turned the village of Sorauren, and Major-General Byng's  
 XLIV. brigade attacked and carried the village of Ostiz. Sir Lowry  
 1813. Cole attacked their front, when their confidence in themselves  
 as well as in their ground had thus been shaken, and the  
 French were then compelled to abandon a position which Lord  
 Wellington declared to be one of the strongest and most  
 difficult of access that he had ever seen occupied by troops.

*July.*

While these operations were going on, and in proportion as they succeeded, troops were detached to support Sir Rowland. Late in the morning the enemy appeared in his front, and made many vigorous attacks, while Drouet manoeuvred upon his left: every attack was repulsed, and the allies maintained their ground, till Drouet by a more distant movement ascended the ridge, and came absolutely round their left flank; Sir Rowland then leisurely retired about a mile to a range of heights near Eguarras, and repelled every attempt to dislodge him from that strong ground. Lord Wellington meantime pursued the enemy after he had driven them from their position on the mountain, and at sunset he was at Olaque, immediately in the rear of their attack upon Sir Rowland. Their last hope had failed, and, withdrawing from Sir Rowland's front during the night, they retreated with great ability through the pass of Doña Maria, and left two divisions there in a strong position to cover their rear in the pass. Sir Rowland and Lord Dalhousie were ordered to attack the pass; they moved by parallel roads; and the enemy, closely pressed by the 7th division, were ascending the hill in great haste, when Sir Rowland arrived at the foot of the pass, not in time to cut off any part of their rear. Both divisions ascended the hill, each by its own road; and the French took up a strong position at the top of the pass, with a cloud of skirmishers in front. On the left, which was Sir Rowland's side, the attack was led



by Lieutenant-General Stewart with Major-General Walker's brigade; they forced the skirmishers back to the summit of the hill, but coming there upon the main body, found it so numerous and so strongly posted, that they deemed it necessary to withdraw till the 7th division should come into closer co-operation. They had not long to wait for this: General Stewart was wounded, and the command devolved upon Major-General Pringle; he renewed the attack on that side, while Lord Dalhousie pressed the enemy on the other; both divisions gained the height about the same time, and the enemy, after sustaining a very considerable loss, retired; they were pursued for some way down, but a thick fog favoured them, and prevented the allies from profiting further by the advantage they had gained. Lord Wellington meantime moved with Major-General Byng's brigade and Sir Lowry Cole's division through the pass of Velate upon Irurita, thus turning their position on Doña Maria. A large convoy of provisions and stores was taken by Major-General Byng at Elizondo. The pursuit was continued during the following day in the vale of the Bidassoa. Byng possessed himself of the valley of Bastan and the position on the Puerto de Maya; and at the close of the day the different divisions were re-established nearly on the same ground which they had occupied when their operations commenced, eight days before. The enemy had now two divisions posted on the Puerto de Echalar, and nearly their whole army behind that pass; and Lord Wellington resolved to dislodge them by a combined attack and movement of the 4th, 7th, and light divisions, which had advanced by the vale of the Bidassoa toward the frontier. The 7th, taking a shorter line across the mountains from Sumbilla, arrived before the 4th. Major-General Barnes's brigade was formed for the attack, advanced before the others could co-operate, and with a regularity and gallantry which, Lord Wellington says, he had seldom seen

CHAP.  
XLIV.

1813.

*August.**August 1.*



CHAP.  
XLIV.

1813.

*August.*

equalled, drove the two French divisions from the formidable heights which they vainly endeavoured to maintain. Major-General Kempt's brigade of the light division likewise drove a very considerable force from the rock which forms the left of the pass; and thus no enemy was left in the field, within this part of the Spanish frontier. During these operations the loss of the allies amounted to 6000 in killed, wounded, and missing; that of the French exceeded 8000. On both sides great ability had been manifested; seldom indeed has the art of war been displayed with such skill, and upon such difficult ground. To guard against the repetition of so formidable an effort on the enemy's part, the positions which the allies occupied were strengthened by redoubts and intrenchments. While the main scene of action lay in the neighbourhood of Pamplona, that portion of the enemy's force which had been left to observe the allies on the great road from Irun, attacked Longa, who occupied that part of the Bidassoa and the town of Vera with his division. He repulsed them with great loss; and it was not the least of the discouraging reflections, which could not but occur to the enemy after the failure of all these well planned and well attempted endeavours, that the Spanish troops had now become as efficient as the Portugueze.

*Siege of St.  
Sebastian's  
resumed.*

During these eventful days the guns had been withdrawn from the batteries before St. Sebastian's, and, with all the stores, embarked at Passages, and the transports had been sent to sea; but a blockade was kept up, and the guard continued to hold the trenches. The vigilant enemy made a sortie on the morning of the 27th, and carried off between 200 and 300 Portugueze and English from the trenches prisoners into the town. Want of foresight on the part of the besiegers allowed them this opportunity, for some of the guns of the left embrasures had, in apprehension of such an attempt, been ar-



ranged so as to take the enemy in flank ; and those guns were withdrawn with the others. On the 3rd the French surprized a patrol in the parallel and made them prisoners : but Soult's defeat was known now ; the stores were re-landed at Passages, and Sir Thomas Graham waited only for the arrival of more artillery and ammunition from England to re-commence the siege. The infantry meantime rested on its arms ; and the cavalry, who longed to eat the green maize (which was prohibited), kept their horses in good exercise in looking for straw. The 17th was Buonaparte's birthday ; three salutes were fired from the Castle of St. Sebastian's on the eve preceding, as many at four in the morning, and again at noon ; and at night the words "*Vive Napoleon le Grand*" were displayed in letters of light upon the castle : . . it was the last of his birthdays that was commemorated by any public celebration. The expected artillery arrived at Passages on the 18th. That little town had never in the days of its prosperity, when it was the port of the Caraccas company, presented a scene so busy, nor while it lasted so gainful to the inhabitants and the peasantry of the surrounding country. The market for the army was held here, which they supplied with necessaries, the produce of the land ; and which at this time wanted nothing wherewith England could supply it, so frequent now and so easy was the intercourse. Here the reinforcements were landed, which, now that the British government had caught the spirit of its victorious general, were no longer limited by parsimonious impolicy. When the horses were to be landed they were lowered from the transports into the sea, and guided by a rope as they swam to shore ; but this sudden transition from the extreme heat of the hold to the cold water proved fatal to several of them.

The garrison of St. Sebastian's employed the time which the blockade afforded them so well, in strengthening their defences

CHAP.  
XLIV.

1813.

August 6.



CHAP.  
XLIV.

1813.

---

*August.*

and adding new ones, that when the allies had to re-commence the siege, the place was stronger than before. The plan now determined on was to lay open the two round towers on each end of the first breach, and connect it with the second breach, which was to the right, add to it another on the left, and demolish a demi-bastion to the left of the whole, by which the approach was flanked. A mortar battery was also erected for the purpose of annoying the castle across the bay. Sailors were employed in this, and never did men more thoroughly enjoy their occupation. They had double allowance of grog, as their work required; and at their own cost they had a fiddler; they who had worked their spell in the battery went to relieve their comrades in the dance, and at every shot which fell upon the castle they gave three cheers. Little effect was produced by this battery, because of its distance. Between it and the town is the island of St. Clara, high and rocky, about half a mile in circumference, which the French occupied; it was deemed expedient to dislodge them and take possession of it, because the season was approaching when ships might be obliged to leave the coast, and this spot facilitated the enemy's communication with their own country. The only landing-place was under a flight of steps, commanded by a small intrenchment on the west point of the island, and exposed to the whole range of works on the west side of the rock and of the walls; the garrison, consisting of an officer and twenty-four men, were thus enabled to make such a resistance, that nineteen of the assailants were killed and wounded. The island however was taken, and the garrison made prisoners.

The actual siege re-commenced on the 24th; and at the following midnight the enemy made a sortie, entered the of the advanced part trenches and carried confusion into the parallel; but when they attempted to sweep along its right, a



part of the guard checked them, and they retired into the town, taking with them about twelve prisoners. The batteries opened on the morning of the 26th. On the night of the 27th another sortie was tried; but experience had made the besiegers more vigilant, and it was repulsed before the slightest mischief could be done. Nothing that skill and ingenuity could devise was omitted by the garrison; they repaired by night as far as possible the injury which had been done in the day; cleared away the rubbish; and at the points at which the batteries were directed, let down large solid beams to break the force of the shot. But in this branch of the art of war, the means of attack are hitherto more efficient than those of defence; and in the course of the 29th the enemy's fire was nearly subdued. They lost many men by our spherical case shot; and they attempted to imitate what they had found so destructive, by filling common shells with small balls, and bursting them over the heads of the besiegers; but these were without effect. On the night of the 29th there was a false attack made with the hope of inducing the enemy to spring the mines, which it was not doubted that they had prepared; they fired most of their guns, but the end was not answered, for no mine was exploded.

Men were now invited to volunteer for the assault, such men, it was said, "as knew how to show other troops the way to mount a breach." When this was communicated to the 4th division, which was to furnish 400 men, the whole division moved forward. The column of attack was formed of the 2d brigade of the 5th division, commanded by Major-General Robinson, with an immediate support of 150 volunteers from the light division, 400 from the first, and two from the 4th; and with the remainder of the 5th division in reserve, the whole under the direction of Sir James Leith. Sir James had been severely wounded in the battle of Salamanca, and his constitution still felt the effects of the Walcheren fever; but leaving England as

CHAP.  
XLIV.  
1813.  
*August.*

*Preparations for assaulting the town.*



CHAP. soon as he was sufficiently recovered to discharge his duties, he  
 XLIV. arrived at St. Sebastian's on the 29th, and resumed the command  
 1813. of his division in the trenches, Major-General Oswald, who  
 August. had held it during his absence, resigning it and acting as a  
 volunteer. As the breaches now appeared to be practicable,  
 the assault was ordered for eleven o'clock on the forenoon of  
 the 31st, being the time of low water; and to prepare de-  
 bouches for the troops, three shafts were sunk at the advanced  
 sap on the right, for the purpose of breaking through the sea  
 wall, which was of masonry, four feet thick and ten feet above  
 the high water mark; they were sunk eight feet below the  
 surface, and each loaded with 540 pounds of powder.

*Soult moves  
 for its re-  
 lief.*

Marshal Soult, meantime, as soon as he knew that the siege  
 had been re-commenced, leaving one division in front of the  
 British light division, and another in front of the 7th, moved  
 the rest of his army to the camp at Urogne, with the obvious  
 intention of making an attempt to relieve the place. Under  
 that expectation all the troops of horse artillery were ordered  
 to march, and the artillery not employed in the siege was sent  
 to the front. The eve of the assault was therefore a time of  
 more than usual anxiety; for if either the assault should fail,  
 or Soult should succeed, the situation of the allies would be  
 rendered critical. In the course of the day the wood and  
 rubbish of the right breach took fire, and a mine near it ex-  
 ploded; and in the afternoon five small mines within the town  
 were blown up by the falling of a shell. The evening closed  
 in with a storm of thunder and lightning and heavy rain. Two  
 hours after midnight the three mines were sprung, and com-  
 pletely effected the purpose of blowing down the sea wall; the  
 etonnairs were immediately connected; a good passage out  
 for the troops was thus formed, and the farther object was  
 attained of securing all the works in their rear from any  
 galleries which the enemy might have run out in that direction.

*Assault of  
 St. Sebas-  
 tian's.*