ordered he had the means of carrying out. The English general was at the mercy of ministers at home, with whom the means of correspondence were slow and precarious. As we have seen, when it was inconvenient to assist or impossible to answer him, they simply ignored his applications and left him to himself. Now the army, disgusted at what seemed cowardly caution, was verging on open mutiny ; even officers high in rank made no allowance for his difficulties ; the Spaniards were failing him, and he was equally worried by dilatoriness in the north, and apprehensions of the rashness of those who should have relieved him from pressure from the south and east. The Portuguese were reasonably clamorous for promised subsidies which had been long withheld ; and finally, his military reputation was being imperilled by causes altogether beyond his control. The immediate necessity was a supply of money, and no money was forthcoming. He wrote a despatch on the 15th June, and when we remember the position after Talavera we may understand the force of his protest. 'I have never been in such distress as at present, and some serious misfortune must happen if the Government do not attend seriously to the subject and supply us regularly with money. The arrears and distresses of the Portuguese Government are a joke to ours, and if our credit was not better than theirs we should certainly starve. As it is, if we don't find means to pay our bills for butcher's meat there will be an end to the war at once.' With extreme reluctance he had almost made up his mind again to fall back upon Portugal, when Marmont, of all men, came to his relief.

Marmont, secure in his positions behind the Douro, had only in policy to play the waiting game. For some inscrutable reason he decided to assume the offensive.

No doubt the discomfiture in his attempts at saving Salamanca had been fretting him. The fear of being superseded for that failure was always before his eyes. The prospect of being joined by the King with the central army should have been an argument for sitting fast. Yet the arrival of Joseph might rob him of future laurels; and it has been suggested that Wellington's backwardness at San Christoval had led him to underrate the talents of the adversary. Be that as it may, Wellington learned on the 16th, to his delight and relief, that Marmont had suddenly marched upon Toro, and was passing his troops across the river. Immediately he took his precautions to meet the move by concentrating his centre and left at Canizal. He had welcomed the movement as a relief, nevertheless it gravely endangered him. His left was actually turned; the French Marshal had got a fair start for Salamanca, and by persisting in a direct march on that city, anticipating the allies, he would seize upon the road from Salamanca to Rodrigo. Wellington would consequently be forced to fight, and everything must be staked on the battle. Both armies, ranged parallel to the road to Salamanca, would be in a flank position. To either, defeat would be almost irremediable disaster. Yet the French would probably fare the worse, for an English victory would cut them off from their crossing place, and throw them back on the Lower Douro, among the Spanish and Portuguese irregulars who were swarming forward to the mountain passes. But Marmont had no mind to push matters to so desperate an issue. The movement from Toro had been merely a feint to leave the passages over the upper river open. Wellington, although inclined to believe the feint an actuality, had nevertheless always misdoubted it, and while concentrating his main forces to

the left, had left his right on guard on the Trabancos, watching Pollos and Tordesillas. And Marmont, countermarching on the 17th, had crossed the river at those two passages, concentrating his whole army that evening at Nava del Rey. The allied right was much in the air and very critically situated. At midnight Wellington learned at Toro that it was confronting the whole hostile army. There was no time to move his left and centre to its support. He therefore decided to concentrate on an intermediate line of defence. At seven o'clock on the 18th he was on the Trabancos, where General Cotton, who had maintained his dangerous position through the night, had been resisting a formidable attack since daybreak. Meantime Marmont had learned that only a part of the English army was before him. He crossed the Trabancos in two columns, marching at best pace for the Guarena, over open country and rolling downs. The British infantry, retreating on a parallel line, made a sharp race of it, protected by the cavalry on flank and rear. The day was oppressively hot, and the air was loaded with dust. That was one of the strangest spectacles in the story of wars. When the clouds of dust thinned or lifted, the parched and fagged soldiers could be seen pressing forward, often within short musket-range, with no thought but that of arriving the first at the goal. Now and again, when there was some momentary halt, there came a rapid exchange of bullets, and invariably a field gun opened fire, provoking a quick response to the challenge. The British won the race for the river by a bare neck, for as the Light Division stooped to drink in fording it, the French batteries, galloping up to the ridge, rained down a shower of shot upon them. But the right had already crossed the river and was resting upon the main body; an attempt of the French to force the passage was repelled,

and the armies remained quietly in presence throughout the 19th.

The armies again faced each other on their respective lines of retreat. From Wellington's right there were roads leading to the bridge of Salamanca and the fords over the Tormes; nor did he expect that Marmont would attempt to turn it. Had he known that Carlos d'España had neglected his instructions to garrison the castle at Alba, which commanded the uppermost crossing, his dispositions would have been different. His immediate object was the protection of Salamanca, for should the French recover it they would be strongly posted behind the river, with control of the bridge; the fruits of the recent sieges would have been lost and his way barred once more for a further advance.

Marmont knew—what Wellington did not—that Alba was unoccupied. Therefore on the 20th he concentrated to the left, moved his columns up the Guarena, crossed the river and marched for Alba. To parry the stroke at his communications, the English general was constrained to follow. Then the race recommenced under identical conditions and over open country as before. Nor could it have been conducted without precipitating an encounter undesired by both, unless directed on either side by consummate tacticians. But the French justified their reputation as the best marchers in Europe. At Contalpino the allies had been outmarched and outflanked. Marmont had reached Huerta on the Tormes. Wellington, inclining to the south-west, took position on the heights to his right. He was back at his old position on San Christoval, which he had quitted in triumph a month before. He was gravely disquieted that night and full of anxious forebodings. Marmont had fairly outmarched him, exhibiting excellent strategy

and familiar knowledge of the ground. Were the race to be resumed on the morrow he must be outpaced again, and again the enemy would anticipate him by seizing the road to Rodrigo. He had, apparently, nothing but a choice of dangers. A battle under disadvantages was less advisable than ever, for Caffarelli's cavalry were known to be on the march, and Joseph was coming up with the army of the centre. If he remained where he was, his communications would be severed; if he decided for retreat, he lost Salamanca.

On the 21st Marmont was crossing at Alba and Huerta. He threw a strong garrison into the castle at the former place, and his leading divisions took ground at Calvariza-Arriba. That village was on the outskirts of a forest covering the ground to the river. Wellington hastened to meet the movement by sending troops across at the lower fords. Meantime he could only wait, but it became evident that the decisive battle was impending. Hitherto everything had gone in favour of the French, but unless Wellington were actually defeated their previous gains must go for nothing. And if Marmont were suffered to have his way to the south of the Tormes, the allied communications with their base would be effectually intercepted. The morning of the 22d relieved Wellington from his dilemmas; for the second time Marmont made a mistake, and it was a more fatal blunder than the former.

If the night of the 20th had been an anxious one for the English general, that of the 21st was more disquieting to his army. When the light division descended to the ford of Aldea Lengua it was enveloped in premature and pitchy darkness. One of the sudden summer storms had been brooding, and

now it burst. The men could hardly hold their own in passing the swollen Tormes; the incessant roar of the thunder was deafening, and the lightning, drawn down by the bristling bayonets, caused many casualties. The 5th Dragoon Guards had picketed their horses on the left bank. The startled animals broke loose from their fastenings, and as they galloped to and fro in the darkness it was believed that the French cavalry were charging. Nevertheless, through darkness, difficulties and alarms, the infantry moved forward in unbroken order, bivouacking upon the ground assigned to it in circumstances as miserable as could well be conceived.

With break of day Marmont occupied the ridge of Calvariza-Arriba in greater strength, and his intentions became unmistakable. A little to the left of the position were two isolated hills named the Arapiles, and had Marmont succeeded in securing both he might have formed across his adversary's right and fought the battle with everything in his favour. But as Wellington described what occurred, with his racy and inimitable succinctness, we can do no better than quote him. Thus he wrote to Graham,—

'I took up the ground which you were to have taken during the siege of Salamanca. We had a race for the large Arapiles, which is the more distant of the two detached heights. This race the French won, and they were too strong to be dislodged without a general action. I knew that the French were to be forced by the cavalry of the army of the north on the 22d or 23d, and that the army of the centre was likely to be in motion. Marmont ought to have given me a *pont d'or*, and he would have made a handsome operation of it; but, instead of that, after manœuvring all the morning in the usual French style—nobody knew with what

object—he at last pressed upon my right in such a manner, at the same time without engaging, that he would have carried our Arapiles, or would have confined us entirely to our position. This was not to be endured, and we fell upon him, turning his left flank, and I never saw an army receive such a beating. I had desired the Spaniards to continue to occupy the castle of Alba de Tormes. Don Carlos d'España had evacuated it, I believe, before he knew my wishes, and he was afraid to let me know that he had done so, and I did not know it till I found no enemy at the fords of the Tormes. When I lost sight of them I marched upon Huerta and Encinas. If I had known there had been no garrison in Alba I should have marched there and should probably have had them all.'

CHAPTER XIV

SALAMANCA AND BURGOS

July—September 1812

MARMONT 'had been manœuvring all the morning,' and Wellington began to believe that the manœuvring meant nothing. He had retired accordingly from the English Arapiles, when a report was brought him that the French were at last in rapid motion and advancing fast to the Rodrigo road. He galloped back to his former position and eagerly scanned the plain below. Then a light broke over his stern features, and those who observed them might read in the intensity of his relief the anxiety he had concealed beneath an air of impenetrable composure. The French left, hurrying too fast, had entirely lost touch with the centre. His enemy had delivered himself into his hands. 'Egad, I have them now!' he exclaimed, in triumphant jubilation. The orders came quick and brief, and in a few minutes the avalanche of serried columns was launched in the gap that had opened so opportunely. The English rushed down under a tremendous fire which opened on the heads of their columns from the French Arapiles. Marmont, looking down from behind the batteries, lost not a moment in taking steps to retrieve his error. He sent back to hasten the advance of his centre; he sent forward to check the advance of his left wing. He saw everything but the

approach of our 3d Division, which was hidden from him by the hills. He hoped that with the terrible fire directed on them he could hold the British in check till he had brought up his supports and restored the battle. But then he saw the 3d Division break forth from behind the heights and throw themselves across the advance of his left. The left was led by Thomières, whose courage was as undeniable as the rapacity which distinguished him among the plundering generals who served in Portugal under Junot. Thomières deemed that he was carrying all before him, and had expected to see the allies in full retreat along the ridge, closely pressed by forces of the Marshal. On the contrary, Pakenham, one of the most dashing and impetuous of soldiers, had flung himself in the hot ardour of onset across his path, and simultaneously he was arrested by the orders of recall. At the same time, *pour surcroît de malheur*, the French lost their leader. Marmont, hurrying to the front, was struck down by a shell, which shattered an arm and inflicted grievous body wounds. Bonnet, succeeding by seniority, almost immediately met a somewhat similar fate, and then the command devolved on Clausel, one of Napoleon's latest creation of marshals, whom he always held in exceptional consideration. Nor did he ever show his qualities with more distinguished brilliancy than when he withdrew his army from the rout of Salamanca, after heroic efforts to redeem the day, which were very nearly successful.

The day was drawing on, and the decision must be speedy. It was at five o'clock that Pakenham assailed Thomières. The French, though disappointed and disheartened, offered an obstinate defence; but there was no denying the British rush, and no resisting the persistent tactics which worked round steadily to the left. Thomières, fighting fiercely, fell back on the Arapiles,

where the British centre was making good the ground in face of the storm of shot and shell. The 4th and 5th Divisions kept pushing forward, and between their attack and that of Pakenham, the cavalry, light and heavy, were coming to the front. Clausel had by this time effected his junction with Thomières, and was showing a gallant front to the impetuous advance. But the troops were in disorder; the sun was beating in their eyes, and through the dense clouds of dust they could only fire at random. Then from behind the impenetrable veil they heard the rush and trampling of horses in masses. It was Le Marchant charging at the head of the English heavy cavalry on disordered squares and broken lines, and the light dragoons were flanking the heavies. The ranks broke, and there was a *sauve qui peut*, the fugitives scattering in the dark confusion, and even seeking refuge, in their bewilderment, in the British squares. The horsemen used their sabres unsparingly, and the carnage was terrible. Le Marchant had fallen, but Cotton replaced him, and the rout of the French left was complete. The victors closed up in a formidable line, and Pakenham, upon the French left, was still pressing onward.

The battle had been won on the allied right, and all was going well on the other wing, in spite of a most determined resistance, for several of the French divisions had only now come into action. Our 4th and 5th Divisions, passing the village of Arapiles, were steadily pressing Bonnet back. Then an unfortunate mistake jeopardised the day. Pack and his Portuguese, acting apparently without orders, in their onset assailed the French Arapiles. Though admirably led, and fighting with the greatest gallantry, they were hurled down again with heavy loss. Consequently the right of the British infantry was left exposed to a flanking attack

which threatened to succeed. Clausel saw his opportunity, and skilfully availed himself of it. His fresh troops were still coming up from the forest on his right, and he formed them behind his shattered battalions. The tide of battle ebbed backwards, and for the moment it seemed as if the 4th Division would be repulsed and the allied right-centre broken, for Maucune, left at liberty now the French Arapiles hill was secure, was menacing the 4th Division on flank and in rear. The English generals were falling as the French had fallen before. Cole and Leith, and lastly Beresford, were successively carried off the field. The fortunes of the battle hung in suspense, and a trifle might turn them either way. Happily Wellington, who had been almost omnipresent, was on the spot, and his prudence had held back a strong reserve. Clinton, with the 6th Division, was ordered up, and the charge of 6000 fresh combatants, infuriated by impatient waiting, was not to be denied. Wellington followed up that hard-won success by an order to cut the faltering line of the French with the advance of the 1st Division. That order, for some reason, was not executed, and to that mistake, with the French occupation of the castle of Alba, their army owed its escape from practical annihilation. Clausel, when his noble attempt at retrieving the day had failed, turned his attention promptly to securing his retreat. He was admirably seconded by Foy, and above all by Maucune. It was Maucune who covered the retiring of Foy, till that general had withdrawn to the shelter of the woods. But the most effectual protectors of the orderly withdrawal were the falling shades of night. Wellington, watching the pursuit, could only gather what was going forward by the fitful flashing of the musketry and occasional blazes from the batteries. At

length the last fires died out in the darkness, and he knew that for the time the enemy was beyond his reach. He cared the less, for he believed that Clausel was effectively trapped. For, as will be remembered, he was still in the belief that Alba and its passage were guarded. He fancied that in the morning he would find the French crowded up at the fords of Huerta, and thither, with the first light, he pressed forward, personally directing the march of the light division. All his strategy had been directed to strengthening his left, that he might follow up the action with a decisive stroke. But Clausel, knowing that his retreat was open by Alba, had skilfully availed himself of his adversary's misapprehension and of the short night. His army was passed across the Tormes by the narrow bridge and the fords, and daylight found him in swift retreat, having already organised a formidable rear-guard. Never did the French prove their marching powers in more marvellous fashion. His rear-guard was engaged in sharp skirmishing, but his next night halt was at Flores de Avila, forty miles from Salamanca. Moreover, his line of retreat to the eastward was well chosen, for Wellington naturally expected he would have returned to Tordesillas and the former positions behind the Douro.

The victory threw the game into the victor's hands, and again left him master of the future operations. Nor should it be forgotten that the effects were not limited to the Peninsula. The rude shock of Salamanca was felt on the banks of the Moskowa. It was on the very eve of the bloody battle of the Borodino that Marmont's aide-de-camp, bearing the disheartening tidings, arrived at the headquarters of the Grand Army. Though the Emperor read the despatches with apparent indifference, and,

strange to say, made no harsh comments, the effect was stunning. The officer who entered his tent in the morning found him with his head buried in his hands. Forgetful of appearances, he loudly bewailed the inconstancy of fortune. While the battle with the Russians which he had so ardently longed for was raging, he wandered aimlessly about on a hillock, his head sunk on his breast. No doubt grief was aggravating the bodily ailment that troubled him, and his thoughts were wandering to Spain. Murat and Ney sent to demand reinforcements. Then, says Ségur, 'Napoleon was seized with unwonted hesitation.' In place of the prompt decision of old, he was plunged in painful deliberation. He issued orders, only to countermand them, and finally refused the supports. Murat declared that on that eventful day he had seen nothing of the genius of his brother-in-law; and the Viceroy of Italy as plainly avowed that he could not understand the Emperor's indecision. In fact, at that most critical moment, it was to Wellington that Kutusoff was indebted for the reprieve by which he profited, and for which he had never dared to hope.

After a night passed at Flores de Avila, Clausel crossed the Zapardiel and retired on Valladolid. The pursuit was slack, for our troops were exhausted; nevertheless, the light cavalry harassed his rear, and numerous tragglers fell into the hands of the peasants, from whom they had no mercy to expect. He made no stand at Valladolid, retreating upon Burgos, and abandoning the former city with its guns and magazines. His garrisons on the Douro were also sacrificed, and the Gallicians, after their long delays, at last came down in force. Wellington entered Valladolid on the 30th, but he lost no time, and made no stay there. Strengthening his left, and leaving it to follow Clausel up the valleys of the

Pisuerga and Arlanzon rivers, on the following day he had re-crossed the Douro, and established his head-quarters at Cuellar. For himself, he had decided to march upon Madrid, in consideration of the moral consequences of occupying the capital.

The defeat of Marmont and the discomfiture of the army of Portugal had thrown Joseph into extreme perplexity. He had been advancing leisurely to Marmont's support, and now he was confronting the main forces of the victorious allies. He decided not to defend the passes of the Guadarama, as they might be turned by the valley of the Tagus. Clearly he was in no condition to hold Madrid, and the only question was how and whither to conduct the evacuation. Soult had, as usual, disobeyed his orders, which were to send 10,000 men to Toledo. But Soult in Andalusia was his most reliable resource, and accordingly he resolved to move thither by La Mancha. In fact it was flight far more than retreat. The troops of the escort had broken loose from all restraint, and plundered those they were supposed to be protecting. They would have broken into open mutiny had it not been for the presence and authority of Marshal Jourdan. Including soldiers, there was a mixed multitude of 20,000, of every age, sex and condition. In their train were 2000 or 3000 carriages loaded with baggage and booty. Provisions were scarce, and were seized by the soldiers, who dragged the women and children from the beasts which were carrying them. No sort of order was restored till the mob was on the southern side of the Tagus, where it was joined by the garrisons of Aranjuez and Toledo. But nothing is so bad that it may not be worse, and Wellington might have launched his cavalry on the panic-stricken fugitives. Napier suggests that he withheld the order in mercy, because

he knew that the soldiers would probably have escaped, and that the blow would have fallen on the weak and the helpless.

On the 13th of August he entered Madrid. The reception of the deliverer rather resembled the adoration of a god than any welcome of a mortal. He and the members of his staff scarcely dared to venture abroad. In vain they dressed themselves in civilian clothes and went out for exercise in the dark. Invariably they were recognised and followed with acclamations. That the conqueror never lost his head for a moment is shown in his despatches. He appreciated those very sincere proofs of his popularity at their true value, and declared from sad experience that they would have no practical effect on the Spanish allies, as was demonstrated only too soon by the sluggish movements of the Gallician army, and by the resentful insubordination of Ballesteros, which left Soult and King Joseph free to resume the offensive operations which might have been defeated or delayed by a demonstration on their left flank. Wellington was constrained to remain in the capital till it had been decided whether Soult should abandon Andalusia.

Joseph had again sent peremptory orders that Soult should join him with his united forces, falling back either through Murcia or Valencia. Soult, who had disobeyed all the previous instructions, and who had a soldier's contempt for the monarch's military talents, naturally hesitated and remonstrated. Moreover, he and the King mutually misunderstood each other. Evidently Soult honestly believed that Joseph meant to throw the Emperor over, and endeavour to make such terms with the Spaniards as might save his throne. Undoubtedly all his thoughts were directed to the recovery of his capital. Soult's confidential despatches to his master

were intercepted and opened by Joseph, who was naturally embittered against the Marshal by a perusal of the contents. But he was himself writing to his brother at the same time, charging Soult with aspiring to a crown in Andalusia. There was even less ground for that charge than for the earlier accusations of a similar character. But the King and the Marshal firmly believed their respective charges, which was fatal to acting in concert as joint leaders. Joseph had set his heart on recovering Madrid, and Soult had conceived a daring and original scheme, which was beyond the King's timid comprehension. Yet it commended itself so forcibly to the genius of Napoleon, that it was then he declared, with hasty injustice to Suchet, Clausel, St Cyr and others, that Soult was the only military head in Spain. Soult was naturally loath to relinquish all the advantages he had gained by three years of able military operations and sagacious civil administration in the south. He had acted so ably, indeed, that it seemed certain that the French sympathisers would soon have the ascendency in Andalusian councils. Briefly, his scheme was this. He would sacrifice communications, if necessary, with France by the western roads, leaving them to be guarded by the armies of Portugal and the north, which in case of reverses might retreat upon the frontiers. He would still hold Andalusia, press the siege of Cadiz, and keep open the more circuituous communications by the east. Joseph should retreat through La Mancha upon Despeñas Perros, and the army of occupation would concentrate behind the Morena. If possible, Joseph should bring with him the army of Portugal. Then, if Spain north of the Morena were to be abandoned, nevertheless 80,000 or 100,000 French, resting on the magazines and strong places in Andalusia, would have changed the theatre of

war. Wellington must turn his attention to the safety of Lisbon, or force the formidable passes of the Morena. Meantime the French could afford to wait, till succours came by way of the north from the Emperor, and everything was to be gained by activity in delay. But when Joseph decided to rally Suchet to him on the Valencian roads, Soult had no option but to comply.

Wellington's genius had either suspected the conceptions of Soult, or he had some actual indications of his intentions. Hence he remained at Madrid till he should have information of the abandonment of Andalusia, which was not until Soult, recalling his garrisons, had concentrated the retiring army upon Granada. The protracted siege of Cadiz was raised on the 24th August with a great destruction of guns and the loss of the gunboats. Meantime Joseph, by another blunder, had needlessly weakened his force by leaving a garrison to occupy the Retiro, a fortified palace to the east of Madrid, containing vast stores and munitions. Necessarily the Retiro surrendered, and its defenders were sacrificed. Then the capital saw a strange situation. The markets were overflowing with provisions, but there was no money to buy. The population of all ranks was absolutely penniless. The tyranny of the intrusive Government had squeezed it dry. When taxes had been remitted by edicts the imposts had been made heavier. When the octroi duties had been nominally repealed in response to the cries of distress, they had in reality been increased. Forced loans were wrung from the citizens; the poorest artisans were compelled to take out licences to entitle them to work. The Government 'cornered' the grain, to sell it at arbitrary prices. The hospitals were overcrowded with the sick and starving, and of the deaths in the spring of 1812 two-thirds were attributed to misery