

to put his troops in motion, he made a demonstration against Ciudad Rodrigo, so feeble that it scarcely called the garrison to the ramparts, and then, as if all chance of success in Portugal was at an end, he broke through the pass of Perales, reached Alcantara, and rejoined the first corps, a movement equally at variance with Napoleon's orders, and with good military discretion; for the first directed him upon Abrantes, and the second would have carried him upon Viséu. The march to the latter place, while it insured a junction with Soult, would not have prevented an after movement upon Abrantes; the obstacles were by no means so great as those which awaited him on the march to Alcantara, and the great error of abandoning the whole country, between the Tagus and the Douro, to the insurgents, would have been avoided. Here then was one direct cause of failure; yet the error, although great, was not irreparable. If Soult was abandoned to his own resources, he had also obtained a firm and important position in the north, while Victor, reinforced by ten thousand men, was enabled to operate against Lisbon by the Alemtejo, more efficaciously than before; he, however, seems to have been less disposed than Lapisse to execute his instructions.

VICTOR.

1. The inactivity of this Marshal, after the rout of Ucles, has been already mentioned. It is certain that if the fourth and first corps had been well handled, neither Cuesta nor Cartoajal could have ventured beyond the defiles of the Sierra Morena; much less have bearded the French generals, and established a line of defence along the Tagus. Fifty thousand French troops should in two months have done something more than maintain fifty miles of country on one side of Madrid.

2. The passage of the Tagus was successful, but can hardly be called a skilful operation, unless the Duke of Belluno calculated upon the ignorance of his adversary. Before an able general and a movable army, possessing a pontoon train, it would have scarcely answered to separate the troops in three divisions in an extent of fifty miles, leaving the artillery and parc of ammunition, protected only by some cavalry and one battalion of infantry, within two hours' march of the enemy for three days. If Cuesta had brought up all his detachments, the Meza d'Ibor might have been effectually manned, and ten thousand infantry and all the Spanish cavalry spared, to cross the Tagus at Almaraz on the 17th. In this case Victor's artillery would probably have been captured, and his project certainly baffled.

3. When the passage of the Tagus was effected, Victor not only permitted Cuesta to escape, but actually lost all traces of his army—

an evident fault, and not to be excused by pleading the impediments arising from the swelling of the river, the necessity of securing the communications, &c. If Cuesta's power was despised before the passage of the river, when his army was whole and his position strong, there could be no reason for such great circumspection after his defeat—a circumspection, too, not supported by skill, as the dispersed state of the French army the evening before the battle of Medellin proves.

4. That Victor was enabled to fight Cuesta, on the morning of the 28th, with any prospect of success, must be attributed rather to fortune than to talent. It was a fault to permit the Spaniards to retake the offensive after the defeat on the Tagus; nor can the first movement of the Duke of Belluno in the action be praised. He should have marched into the plain in a compact order of battle. The danger of sending Lasalle and Latour Maubourg to such a distance from the main body, I shall have occasion to show in my observations on Cuesta's operations. The after-movements of the French in this battle were well and rapidly combined and vigorously executed, and the success was proportionate to the ability displayed.

5. The battles of Medellin and Ciudad Real, which utterly destroyed the Spanish armies and laid Seville and Badajoz open—those battles, in which blood was spilt like water, produced no result to the victors; for the French generals, as if they had touched a torpedo, never stretched forth their hands a second time. Sebastiani, indeed, wished to penetrate the Sierra Morena; but the King, fearful of the Valencians, restrained him. On the other hand, Joseph urged Victor to invade the Alemtejo; and the latter would not obey, even when reinforced by Lapisse's division. This last was the great and fatal error of the whole campaign; for nearly all the disposable British and Portuguese troops were thus enabled to move against the Duke of Dalmatia, while the Duke of Belluno contrived neither to fulfil the instructions of Napoleon nor the orders of the King, nor yet to perform any useful achievement himself.

He did not assist the invasion of Portugal, he did not maintain Estremadura, he did not take Seville, nor even prevent Cuesta from twice renewing the offensive; yet he remained in an unhealthy situation until he lost more men by sickness than would have furnished three such battles as Medellin. Two months so unprofitably wasted by a general at the head of thirty thousand good troops, can scarcely be cited. The Duke of Belluno's reputation has been too hardly earned to attribute this inactivity to want of talent. That he was averse to aid the operations of Marshal Soult is evident, and most happy for Portugal it was so; but

whether this aversion arose from personal jealousy, from indisposition to obey the King, or from a mistaken view of affairs, I have no means of judging.

CUESTA.

1. Cuesta's peculiar unfitness for the lead of an army has been remarked more than once. It remains to show that his proceedings, on this occasion, continued to justify those remarks.

To defend a river, on a long line, is generally hopeless, and especially when the defenders have not the means of passing freely, in several places, to the opposite bank. Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Gustavus, Turenne, Napoleon, Wellington, and hundreds of others, have shown how the passage of rivers may be won. Eumenes, who prevented Antigonus from passing the Coprates, is, perhaps, the only example of a general baffling the efforts of a skilful and enterprising enemy in such an attempt.

2. The defence of rivers having always proved fruitless, it follows that no general should calculate upon success, and that he should exert the greatest energy, activity, and vigilance, to avoid a heavy disaster; that all his lines of retreat should be kept free and open, and be concentric; and that to bring his magazines and dépôts close up to the army, in such a situation, is rashness itself. Now Cuesta was inactive, and, disregarding the maxim which forbids the establishment of magazines in the first line of defence, brought up the whole of his to Deleytosa and Truxillo. His combinations were ill-arranged; he abandoned Mirabete without an effort; his dépôts fell into the hands of the enemy; his retreat was confused and eccentric, inasmuch as part of his army retired into the Guadalupe, while others went to Merida and he himself to Medellin.

3. The line of retreat upon Medellin and Campanarios, instead of Badajos, being determined by the necessity of uniting with Albuquerque, cannot be blamed. The immediate return to Medellin was bold and worthy of praise, but its merit consisted in recovering the offensive immediately after a defeat; wherefore Cuesta should not have halted at Medellin, thus giving the lead again to the French General. He should have continued to advance, and falling upon the scattered divisions of the French army, endeavored to beat them in detail, and rally his own detachments in the Sierra de Guadalupe. The error of stopping short at Medellin would have been apparent if Victor, placing a rear-guard to amuse the Spanish General, had taken the road to Seville by Almendralejos and Zafra.

4. Cuesta's general design for the battle of Medellin was well

imagined; that is, it was right to hide his army behind the ridge, and to defer the attack until the enemy had developed his force and order of battle in the plain; but the execution was on the lowest scale. If, instead of advancing in one long and weak line without a reserve, Cuesta had held the greatest part of his troops in solid columns, and thrust them between Lasalle and Latour Maubourg's divisions, which were pushed out like horns from the main body of the French, those generals would have been cut off, and the battle commenced by dividing the French army into three unconnected masses, while the Spaniards would have been compact, well in hand, and masters of the general movements. Nothing could then have saved Victor, except hard fighting, whereas Cuesta's dispositions rendered it impossible for the Spaniards to win the battle by courage, or to escape the pursuit by swiftness.

5. It is remarkable that the Spanish General seems never to have thought of putting Truxillo, Guadalupe, Merida, Estrella, or Medellin in a state of defence, although most if not all of those places had some castle or walls capable of resisting a sudden assault. There was time to do it, for Cuesta remained unmolested, on the Tagus, from January to the middle of March, and every additional point of support thus obtained for an undisciplined army would have diminished the advantages derived by the French from their superior facility of movement; the places themselves might have been garrisoned by the citizens and peasantry, and a week's, a day's, nay, even an hour's delay was of importance to a force like Cuesta's, which, from its inexperience, must have always been liable to confusion.

SOULT.

1. The march of this General in one column upon Tuy was made under the impression that resistance would not be offered; otherwise, it is probable that a division of infantry and a brigade of cavalry would have been sent from St. Jago or Mellid direct upon Orense, to insure the passage of the Minho; it seems to have been also an error in Ney, arising, probably, from the same cause, not to have kept Marchand's division of the sixth corps at Orense until the second corps had effected an entrance into Portugal.

2. Soult's resolution to place the artillery and stores in Tuy, and march into Portugal, trusting to victory for re-opening the communication, would increase the reputation of any general. Three times before he reached Oporto he was obliged to halt, in order to fabricate cartridges for the infantry, from the powder taken in battle, and his whole progress from Tuy to that city was energetic and able in the extreme.

3. The military proceedings, after the taking of Oporto, do not bear the same stamp. The administration of the civil affairs appears to have engrossed the Marshal's attention, and his absence from the immediate scene of action sensibly affected the operations. Franceschi showed too much respect for Trant's corps; Loison's movements were timid and slow; even Laborde's genius seems to have been asleep. The importance of crushing Silveira was obvious, and there is nothing more necessary in war than to strike with all the force you can at once; but here Caulaincourt was first sent; being too weak, Loison reinforced him, Laborde reinforced Loison, and all were scarcely sufficient at last to do that which half would have done at first. But the whole of these transactions are obscure. The great delay that took place before the bridge of Amarante, and the hesitation and frequent recurrence for orders to the Marshal, indicate want of zeal, or a desire to procrastinate, in opposition to Soult's wishes. Judging from Mr. Noble's history of the campaign, this must be traced to a conspiracy in the French army, which shall be touched upon hereafter.

4. The resistance made by the Portuguese peasantry was infinitely creditable to their courage, but there cannot be a stronger proof of the inefficacy of a like defence, when unsupported by good troops. No country is more favorable to such a warfare than the northern provinces of Portugal; the people were brave, they had the assistance of the organized forces under Romana, Silveira, Eben, and the Bishop; yet Soult, in the very worst season of the year, overcoming all resistance, penetrated to Oporto, without an actual loss, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, of more than two thousand five hundred men, including the twelve hundred sick, captured at Chaves.

ROMANA.

1. Romana remained at Oimbra and Monterey, unmolested, from the 21st of January to the 6th of March; he had therefore time to reorganize his forces, and he had, in fact, ten thousand regular troops in tolerable order. He knew, on the 11th or 12th, that Soult was preparing to pass the Minho, between Tuy and Guardia. He knew, also, that the people of Ribidavia and Orense were in arms; that those on the Arosa were preparing to rise, and that, consequently, the French must, were it only from want of food, break out of the contracted position they occupied, either by Ribidavia and Orense, or by crossing the Minho, or by retreating to St. Jago. With these guides, the path of the Spanish General was as plain as the writing on the wall; he was at the head of ten thousand regular troops, and two marches would have brought him

to Ribidavia; in front of that town he might have occupied a position close on the left flank of the French, rallied all the insurgents about him, and organized a formidable warfare. The French durst not have attempted the passage of the Minho while he was in front of Ribidavia, and if they turned against him, the place was favorable for battle, the retreat open by Orense and Monterey; and the difficulty of bringing up artillery would have hampered the pursuit. On the other hand, if Soult had retreated, that alone would have been tantamount to a victory, and Romana would have been well placed to follow, connecting himself with the English vessels of war upon that coast as he advanced.

2. So far from contemplating operations of this nature, Romana did not even concentrate his force; but keeping it extended, in small parties, along fifteen miles of country, indulged himself in speculations about his enemy's weakness, and the prospect of their retreating altogether from the Peninsula. He was only roused from his reveries, by finding his divisions beaten in detail, and himself forced either to join the Portuguese with whom he was quarrelling, or to break his promises to Silveira and fly by cross roads over the mountain on his right; he adopted the latter, thus proving, that whatever might be his resources for raising an insurrection, he could not direct one, and that he was, although brave and active, totally destitute of military talent. At a later period of the war, the Duke of Wellington, after a long and fruitless military discussion, drily observed, that either Romana or himself had mistaken their profession!

SILVEIRA.

1. This Portuguese General's first operations were as ill conducted as Romana's; his posts were too extended, he made no attempt to repair the works of Chaves, none to aid the important insurrection of Ribidavia; but these errors cannot be fairly charged upon him, as his officers were so unruly, that they held a council of war per force, where thirty voted for fighting at Chaves, and twenty-nine against it; the casting voice being given by the voter calling on the troops to follow him. The after-movement, by which Chaves was recaptured, whether devised by Silveira himself, or directed by Marshal Beresford, was bold and skilful; but the advance to Peñafiel, while La Houssaye and Heudelet could from Braga pass by Guimaraens, and cut him off from Amarante, was as rash as his subsequent flight was disgraceful; yet, thanks to the heroic courage of Colonel Patrick, Silveira's reputation as a general was established among his countrymen, by the very action which should have ruined him in their estimation.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

Anarchy in Portugal—Sir J. Cradock quits the command—Sir A. Wellesley arrives at Lisbon—Happy effect of his presence—Nominated Captain-General—His military position described—Resolves to march against Soult—Reaches Coimbra—Conspiracy in the French army—D'Argenton's proceedings—Sir A. Wellesley's situation compared with that of Sir J. Cradock.

It will be remembered that the narrative of Sir John Cradock's proceedings was discontinued at the moment when that General nothing shaken by the importunities of the Regency, the representations of Marshal Beresford, or the advice of Mr. Frere, resolved to await at Lumiar the arrival of the promised reinforcements from England.* While in this position he made every exertion to obtain transport for the supplies, remounts for the cavalry, and draught animals for the artillery; but the Portuguese government gave him no assistance, and an attempt to procure horses and mules in Morocco proving unsuccessful, the army was so scantily furnished that, other reasons failing, this alone would have prevented any advance towards the frontier.

The singular inactivity of Victor surprised Cradock, but did not alter his resolution; yet, being continually importuned to advance, he, when assured that five thousand men of the promised reinforcements were actually off the rock of Lisbon, held a council of war on the subject.† All the generals were averse to marching on Oporto, except Beresford, and he admitted that its propriety depended on Victor's movements; meanwhile that Marshal approached Badajos, Lapisse came down upon the Aguada, and Soult, having stormed Oporto, pushed his advanced posts to the Vouga. A cry of treason was instantly heard throughout Portugal, and both the people and the soldiers evinced a spirit truly alarming. The latter, disregarding the authority of Beresford, and menacing their own officers, declared that it was necessary to slay a thousand traitors in Lisbon; and the regiments in Abrantes even abandoned that post, and

* Sir John Cradock's Correspondence, MS. † See Appendix 1.

marched to join Trant upon the Vouga. But when these disorders were at the worst, and when a vigorous movement of Victor and Lapisse would have produced fatal consequences, General Hill landed with about five thousand men and three hundred artillery horses. Cradock then resolved to advance, moved thereto chiefly by the representations of Beresford, who thought such a measure absolutely necessary to restore confidence, to insure the obedience of the native troops, and to enable him to take measures for the safety of Abrantes.* Thus, about the time that Tuy was relieved by the French, and that Silveira was attacked at Peñafiel, by Laborde, the English army was put in motion, part upon Caldas and Obidos, part upon Rio Mayor; the campaign was, therefore, actually commenced by Cradock, when that General, although his measures had been all approved of by his government, was suddenly and unexpectedly required to surrender his command to Sir Arthur Wellesley, and proceed himself to Gibraltar.

It would appear that this arrangement was adopted after a struggle in the cabinet,† and, certainly, neither the particular choice nor the general principle of employing men of talent without regard to seniority can be censured; nevertheless Sir John Cradock was used unworthily. A general of his rank would never have accepted a command on such terms, and it was neither just nor decent to expose him to an unmerited mortification.

Before the arrival of his successor, Cradock had assembled the army at Leiria, and established his magazines at Abrantes, Santarem, and Peniché; but as the Admiral, fearing the difficult navigation at that season, would not send victuallers to the latter place, the magazines there were but scantily supplied. Meanwhile Lapisse made way by Alcantara to Merida, the re-capture of Chaves became known, and the insurrection in Beira and Tras os Montes took its full spring. Trant's force also increased on the Vouga, and Beresford, who had succeeded in restoring order among the Portuguese battalions, was more than ever urgent for an attack upon Soult; nevertheless Cradock, unprovided with a due proportion of cavalry, unable to procure provisions or forage, and fearful for the safety of Lisbon, refused, and the 24th of April, hearing that his successor had arrived, resigned his command and repaired to Gibraltar.

Sir Arthur Wellesley landed the 22d of April. On the 24th he signified to the British ministers that, affairs being in the condition contemplated by them, it was his intention to assume the command of the army; a circumstance worthy of attention, as indicating that the defence of Portugal was even then considered a secondary ob-

* Sir John Cradock's Correspondence, MS.

† Lord Londonderry's Narrative.

ject, and of uncertain promise. The deliverance of the Peninsula was never due to the foresight and perseverance of the English ministers, but to the firmness and skill of the British generals, and to the courage of troops whom no dangers could daunt, and no hardships dishearten, while they remedied the internal errors of the Cabinet.

The unexpected arrival of a man known only as a victorious commander, created the greatest enthusiasm in Portugal. The Regency immediately nominated him Marshal-General of their troops; the people, always fond of novelty, hailed his presence with enthusiasm; and all those persons, whether Portuguese or British, who had blamed Sir John Cradock's prudent caution, now, anticipating a change of system, spoke largely and confidently of the future operations: in truth, all classes were greatly excited, and an undefined yet powerful sentiment that something great would soon be achieved, pervaded the public mind.

Sir Arthur's plans were, however, neither hastily adopted nor recklessly hurried forward; like Cradock, he felt the danger of removing far from Lisbon while Victor was on the Alemtejo frontier, and he anxiously weighed his own resources against those at the enemy's disposal. Not that he wavered between offensive and defensive movements; a general of his discernment could not fail to perceive that, if the French were acting upon any concerted plan, the false march of Lapisse to Merida had marred their combinations, by placing a whole nation, with all its fortresses and all its forces, whether insurgents, regular troops, or auxiliaries, between the armies of Victor and Soult; and that neither concert nor communication could longer exist between those Marshals.

Soult's offensive strength, also, was evidently exhausted; he might establish himself firmly in the provinces beyond the Douro, but he could not, alone, force his way to Lisbon, a distance of two hundred miles, in a season when the waters were full, and through a country tangled with rivers, mountains, and defiles. He could not hope, with twenty-four thousand men, to beat a whole people in arms, assisted by an auxiliary army of as high reputation, and nearly as numerous as his own; and, more over, there were discontents and conspiracy in his camp, and of this Sir Arthur was aware.

Soult alone, then, was no longer formidable to the capital; but that which weakened him increased the offensive power of Victor, who was now at the head of thirty thousand men, and might march straight upon Lisbon, and through an open country, the only barrier being the Tagus, a river fordable in almost all seasons. Such a movement, or even a semblance of it, must perforce draw the British and native armies to that side, and then Soult, coming down to

the Mondego, might, from thence, connect his operations with Victor's by the line of the Zezere, or advance at once on Lisbon, as occasion offered.

Now, to meet the exigencies of the campaign, the military resources of the English General were:—

1. His central position.

2. The British and German troops, about twenty-six thousand in number; of which the present under arms, including sergeants, amounted to twenty-two thousand, with three thousand seven hundred horses and mules. In the British army corporals and privates only are understood in the present under arms, but in the French army that term includes all military persons—officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers and drummers, combatants and combatants; a distinction to be borne in mind when comparing the forces on each side.

3. The Portuguese troops of the line; of which there might be organized and armed about sixteen thousand.

Nearly all these troops were already collected, or capable of being collected in a short time, between the Tagus and Mondego; and beyond the latter river, Trant and Silveira commanded separate corps; the one upon the Vouga, the other on the Tamega.

4. The militia and the *ordenanzas*, which may be denominated the insurgent force.

5. The fortresses of Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo, Elvas, Abrantes, Peniché, and Badajos.

6. The English fleet, the Portuguese craft, and the free use of the coast and river navigation for his supplies.

7. The assistance of Cuesta, who had six thousand cavalry and thirty thousand infantry, of which twenty-five thousand were actually about the defiles of Monasterio in front of Victor's posts.

Sir Arthur Wellesly's moral resources were, the high courage of his own troops; his personal popularity; the energy of an excited people; a favorable moment; the presentiment of victory, and a mind equal to the occasion.

In a strategic point of view, to fall upon Victor was best, because he was the most dangerous neighbor to Portugal; because his defeat would prove most detrimental to the French, most advantageous to the Spaniards; and because the greatest body of troops could be brought to bear against him. On the other hand, Soult held a rich province, from whence the chief supply of cattle for the army was derived; he was in possession of the second city in the kingdom, where he was forming a French party; the feelings of the Regency and the people were greatly troubled by the loss of Oporto, and their desire to regain it was strongly expressed.

To attack Victor, it was indispensable to concert operations with Cuesta; but that General was ill-disposed towards the British, and to insure his co-operation would have required time, which could be better employed in expelling Soult. For these reasons, Sir Arthur Wellesley determined to attack the last-named Marshal without delay; intending, if successful, to establish a good system of defence in the northern provinces, and then, in conjunction with Cuesta, to turn his arms against Victor, hoping thus to relieve Galicia more effectually than by following the French into that province.

The security of Lisbon being the pivot of the operations against Soult, time was the principal object to be gained. If Victor came fiercely on, he could not be stopped, but his course might be impeded; his path could not be blocked, but it might be planted with thorns. To effect this, eight or ten thousand Portuguese troops were immediately directed upon Abrantes and Santarem, where two British battalions and two regiments of cavalry just disembarked also marched, and were there joined by three other battalions drafted from the army at Leiria.

A body of two thousand men, composed of a militia regiment, and the Lusitanian legion, which remained near Castello Branco after Lapsis had crossed the Tagus, were placed under the command of Colonel Mayne, and directed to take post at the bridge of Alcantara, having orders to defend the passage of the river, and, if necessary, to blow up the structure. At the same time, the flying bridges at Villa Velha and Abrantes were removed, the garrison of the latter place was reinforced, and General Mackenzie was appointed to command all the troops, whether Portuguese or British, thus distributed along the right bank of the Tagus. These precautions appeared sufficient, especially as there was a general disposition to believe the French weaker than they really were. Victor could not, by a mere demonstration, shake this line of defence; and if he forced the bridge of Alcantara, and penetrated by the sterile and difficult route formerly followed by Junot, it would bring him, without guns, upon Abrantes; but Abrantes was already capable of a short resistance, and Mackenzie would have had time to line the rugged banks of the Zezere.

If, however, Victor, leaving Badajos and Elvas behind him, should pass through the Alemtejo, and cross the Tagus between Abrantes and Lisbon, he was to be feared; but Cuesta had promised to follow closely in the French General's rear, and it was reasonable to suppose that Mackenzie, although he might be unable to prevent the passage of the river, would not suffer himself to be cut off from the capital, where, having the assistance of the fleet, the aid of the citi-

zens, and the chance of reinforcements from England, he might defend himself until the army could return from the Douro. Moreover, Victor was eighteen marches from Lisbon; it was only by accident that he and Soult could act in concert, and the allied army, having a sure and rapid mode of correspondence with Cuesta, was already within four marches of Oporto.

The main body of the allies was now directed upon Coimbra; four of the best Portuguese battalions were incorporated in the British brigades; Beresford retained, under his personal command, about six thousand native troops; Trant remained steadfast on the Vouga, Silveira on the Tamega; and Sir Robert Wilson, quitting the command of the legion, was detached, with a small Portuguese force, to Viseu, where, hanging upon Franceschi's left flank, he also communicated with Silveira's corps by the way of Lamego.

The difficulty of bringing up forage and provisions, which had pressed so sorely on Sir John Cradock, was now somewhat lessened. The land transport was indeed still scanty, and the Admiral, dreading the long-shore navigation for large vessels, was without the small craft necessary for victualling the troops by the coast; but the magazines at Caldas were partly filled, and twenty large country boats, loaded with provisions, the owners being induced by premiums to make the run, had got safely into Peniché and the Mondego. In short, the obstacles to a forward movement, although great, were not insurmountable.

Sir Arthur Wellesley reached Coimbra the 2d of May. His army was concentrated there on the 5th, in number about twenty-five thousand sabres and bayonets; nine thousand were Portuguese, three thousand Germans, the remainder British. The Duke of Dalmatia was ignorant that the allies were thus assembled in force upon the Mondego; but many French officers knew it, and were silent, for they were engaged in a plot of a very extraordinary nature, which was probably a part of the conspiracy alluded to in the first volume of this work, as being conducted through the medium of the Princess of Tour and Taxis.

The French soldiers were impatient of their toils; their attachment to Napoleon himself was unshaken, but human nature shrinks from perpetual contact with death, and they were tired of war. This feeling induced some officers of high rank, serving in Spain, to form a plan for changing the French government; generally speaking, these men were friendly to Napoleon personally, but they were republicans in their politics, and earnest to reduce the power of the Emperor. Their project, founded upon the discontent of the troops in the Peninsula, was to make a truce with the English army, to elect a chief, and march into France with the resolution

to abate the pride of Napoleon, or to pull him from his throne. These conspirators at first turned their eyes upon Marshal Ney, but finally resolved to choose Gouvion St. Cyr for their leader; yet it was easier to resolve than to execute. Napoleon's ascendancy, supported by the love and admiration of millions, was not to be shaken by the conspiracy of a few discontented men; and, although the hopes of these last were not entirely relinquished until after Massena's retreat from Portugal in 1810, long before that period they discovered that the soldiers, tired as they were of war, were faithful to their great monarch, and would have slain any who openly stirred against him.

The foregoing facts are stated on the authority of a principal mover of the sedition; but many minor plots had cotemporary existence, for this was the spring-time of folly. In the second corps conspirators were numerous, and by their discourses and their slow sullen execution of orders, had continually thwarted the operations of Marshal Soult, yet without exciting his suspicions; as he penetrated into Portugal, their counteractions increased, and, by the time he arrived at Oporto, their design was ripe for execution.

In the middle of April, John Viana, the son of an Oporto merchant, had appeared at Marshal Beresford's head-quarters, with proposals from the French malcontents; who desired to have an English officer sent to them, to arrange the execution of a plan, which was to be commenced by seizing their General, and giving him over to the British outposts: a detestable project, for it is not in the field, and with a foreign enemy, that soldiers should concert the overthrow of their country's institutions. It would be idle and impertinent in a foreigner to say how much and how long men shall bear with what they deem an oppressive government, but there is a distinct and especial loyalty due from a soldier to his general in the field; a compact of honor, which it is singularly base to violate, and so it has in all ages been considered. When the Argyraspides, or silver-shields of the Macedonians, delivered their general, Eumenes, in bonds, to Antigonus, the latter, although he had tempted them to the deed, and scrupled not to slay the hero, reproached the treacherous soldiers for their conduct, and with the approbation of all men destroyed them; yet Antigonus was not a foreign enemy, but of their own kin and blood.

An English lieutenant-colonel attached to the Portuguese service reluctantly undertook the duty of meeting these French conspirators, and penetrated, by night, but in uniform, behind the French outposts, by the lake of Aveiro, or Ovar. He had previously arranged that one of the malcontents should meet him on the water; the boats unknowingly passed each other in the dark.

and the Englishman returned to Aveiro, where he found John Viana, in company with the French Adjutant-Major, D'Argenton. The latter confirmed what Viana had declared at Thomar; he expressed great respect for Soult, yet dwelt upon the necessity of removing him before an appeal could be made to the soldiers; and he readily agreed to wait, in person, upon Beresford, saying he was himself too strongly supported in the French army to be afraid. Marshal Beresford was then at Lisbon; thither D'Argenton followed, and having seen him and Sir Arthur Wellesley, remained five days in that capital, and then returned to Oporto. While at Lisbon, he, in addition to his former reasons for this conspiracy, stated that Soult wished to make himself King of Portugal; an error into which he and many others naturally fell, from circumstances that I have already noticed.

When Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived at Coimbra, D'Argenton appeared again at the English head-quarters; this time, however, by the order of Sir Arthur, he was conducted through by-paths, and returned convinced, from what he had seen and heard, that although the allies were in force on the Mondego, many days must elapse before they could be in a condition to attack Oporto. During his absence, he had been denounced by General Lefebre, who was falsely imagined to be favorable to the conspiracy; being arrested, passports, signed by Admiral Berkeley, which this unfortunate man, contrary to Sir A. Wellesley's urgent recommendation, had insisted upon having, completely proved his guilt, and Soult, until that moment without suspicion, beheld with amazement the abyss that yawned beneath his feet: his firmness, however, did not desert him. He offered D'Argenton pardon, and even reward, if he would disclose the names of the other conspirators, and relate truly what he had seen of the English and Portuguese armies; the prisoner, to save his life, readily told all that he knew of the British, but Sir A. Wellesley's foresight had rendered that tale useless, and with respect to his French accomplices D'Argenton was immovable. Exaggerating the importance of the conspiracy, he even defied the Marshal's power, and advised him, as the safest course, to adopt the conspirators' sentiments; nor was his boldness fatal to him at the moment, for Soult, anxious to ascertain the extent of the danger, delayed executing him, and he effected his escape during the subsequent operations.

He was not the only person who communicated secretly with the British General. Colonel Donadieu and Colonel Lafitte were engaged in the conspiracy. The latter is said to have had an interview with Sir Arthur, between the outposts of the two armies, and from the first the malcontents were urgent that the movements

of the allied forces should be so regulated as to favor their proceedings. Sir Arthur Wellesley, however, having little dependence upon intrigue, sternly intimated that his operations could not be regulated by their plots, and hastened his military measures.

Under the impression that Silveira was successfully defending the line of the Tamega, the British General at first resolved to reinforce him by sending Beresford's and Wilson's corps across the Douro at Lamego, by which he hoped to cut Soult off from *Tras os Montes*; intending, when their junction was effected, to march with his own army direct upon Oporto, and to cross the Douro near that town, by the aid of Beresford's corps, which would then be on the right bank. This measure, if executed, would, including Trant's, Wilson's, and Silveira's people, have placed a mass of thirty thousand troops, regulars and irregulars, between the *Tras os Montes* and Soult, and the latter must have fought a battle under very unfavorable circumstances, or have fallen back on the *Minho*, which he could scarcely have passed at that season while pressed by the pursuing army. But the plan was necessarily abandoned when intelligence arrived that the bridge of *Amarante* was forced, and that Silveira, pursued by the enemy, was driven over the Douro. The news of this disaster only reached *Coimbra* the 4th of May, and, on the 6th, a part of the army was already in motion to execute a fresh project, adapted to the change of affairs. As this eagerness to fall on Soult may appear to justify those who censured Sir J. Cradock's caution, it may here be well to show how far the circumstances were changed.

When Cradock refused to advance, the Portuguese troops were insubordinate and disorganized; they were now obedient and improved in discipline.

Sir John Cradock had scarcely any cavalry; four regiments had since been added.

In the middle of April, *Cuesta* was only gathering the wrecks of his forces after *Medellin*; he was now at the head of thirty-five thousand men.

The intentions of the British government had been doubtful; they were no longer so. Sir John Cradock's influence had been restricted; the new General came out with enlarged powers, the full confidence of the ministers, and with Portuguese rank. His reputation, his popularity, and the disposition of mankind, always prone to magnify the future, whether for good or bad, combined to give an unusual impulse to public feeling, and enabled him to dictate at once to the Regency, the diplomatists, the generals, and the people; to disregard all petty jealousies and intrigues, and to calculate upon resources from which his predecessor was debarred.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, habituated to the command of armies, was moreover endowed by nature with a lofty genius, and a mind capacious of warlike affairs.

CHAPTER II.

Campaign on the Douro—Relative position of the French and English armies—Sir Arthur Wellesley marches to the Vouga—Sends Beresford to the Douro—A division under General Hill passes the lake of Ovar—Attempt to surprise Franceschi fails—Combat of Grijon—The French re-cross the Douro, and destroy the bridge of Oporto—Passage of the Douro—Soult retreats upon Amarante—Beresford reaches Amarante—Loison retreats from that town—Sir Arthur marches upon Braga—Desperate situation of Soult—His energy—He crosses the Sierra Catalina—Rejoins Loison—Reaches Carvalho d'Este—Falls back to Salamonde—Daring action of Major Dulong—The French pass the Ponte Nova and the Saltador, and retreat by Montalegre—Soult enters Orense—Observations.

CAMPAIGN ON THE DOURO.

AFTER the action of Amarante, Laborde's troops were recalled to Oporto, a brigade of cavalry and a regiment of infantry being left to keep up the communication with Loison. General Botelho, however, soon reappeared upon the Lima, Lorge's dragoons were detached to watch him, and meanwhile Mermet's division was pushed towards the Vouga. The French army was thus extended in detachments from that river to the Tamega, occupying two sides of a triangle, its flanks presented to the enemy, the wings separated by the Douro and without communication, except by the boat-bridge of Oporto. It required three days to unite on the centre, and five days to concentrate on either extremity.

The situation of the allies was very different. Sir Arthur Wellesley, having assembled the bulk of his troops at Coimbra, had the choice of two lines of operation; the one, through Viseu and Lamego, by which, in four or five marches, he could turn the French left and cut them off from *Tras os Montes*; the other leading upon Oporto, whereby, in two marches, he could throw himself unexpectedly, and in very superior numbers, upon the enemy's right, with a prospect of crushing it between the Vouga and the Douro. On the first of these two lines, which were separated by the lofty ridges of the Sierra de Caramula, the march could be covered by Wilson's corps, at Viseu, and by Silveira's near Lamego. Along the second, the movement could be screened by Trant's corps on the Vouga.

The Duke of Dalmatia's dispositions were made in ignorance of

Sir Arthur Wellesley's position, numbers, and intentions. He was not even aware of the vicinity of such an antagonist, but sensible that to advance directly upon Lisbon was beyond his own strength, he meditated to cross the Tamega, and then, covered by that river and the Douro, to follow the great route of Bragança, and so enter the Salamanca country.* It was in this view that Loison had been directed to get possession of Mezamfrio and Pezo de Ragoa, Mermet's advance towards the Vouga being only to support Franceschi's retreat, when the army should commence its movement towards the Tamega.

The 9th of May, D'Argenton was arrested, the film fell from Soult's eyes, and all the perils of his position broke at once upon his view. Treason in his camp which he could not probe; a powerful enemy close in his front; the insurgents again active in his rear; the French troops scattered from the Vouga to the Tamega, from the Douro to the Lima, and commanded by officers whose fidelity was necessarily suspected, while the extent of the conspiracy was unknown. Appalling as this prospect was, the Duke of Dalmatia did not quail at the sight. The general officers assured him of the fidelity of the troops; he ordered Loison to keep Mezamfrio and Ragoa, if he could, but, under any circumstances, to hold Amarante fast, and the greatest part of the guns and stores at Oporto were directed upon the Tamega; the ammunition that could not be removed was destroyed, and Lorge was directed to withdraw the garrison of Viana and make for Amarante; D'Argenton was then closely, although vainly, pressed to discover his accomplices, and all the arrangements necessary for a movement upon the *Tras os Montes* were actively followed up. But the war was coming up with a full and swift tide; Loison, upon whose vigor the success of the operation depended, was giving way; Wellesley was already across the Vouga, and Franceschi was struggling in his grasp.

The English General had resolved to operate along both the routes before spoken of, but the greater facility of supplying the troops by the coast-line, and, above all, the exposed position of the French right wing, so near the allies and so distant from succor, induced him to make the principal attack by the high road leading to Oporto. He had one division of cavalry and three of infantry, exclusive of Beresford's corps. The first division, composed of two brigades of infantry and twelve guns, was commanded by Lieutenant-General Paget. The second, of three brigades of infantry and six guns, by Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke. The third, of two brigades of infantry and six guns, by Major-General

* S. Journal of Operations, MS. See Plan 1.

Hill. The cavalry by Lieutenant-General Payne. The whole amounted to about fourteen thousand five hundred infantry, fifteen hundred cavalry, and twenty-four guns, of which six were only three-pounders.

The 6th of May, Beresford, with six thousand Portuguese, two British battalions, five companies of riflemen, and a squadron of cavalry, marched upon Lamego, by the road of Viseu.

The 7th, the light cavalry and Paget's division advanced towards the Vouga by the Oporto road, but halted on the 8th, to give Beresford time to reach the upper Douro, before the attack on the French right should commence. The 9th, they resumed their march for the bridge of Vouga; Hill's division took the Aveiro road, and the whole reached the line of the Vouga river that evening; but Paget's division was not brought up until after dark, and then with caution, to prevent the enemy's guard from seeing the columns, the intent being to surprise Franceschi the next morning.

That General, with all his cavalry, a regiment of Mermet's division, and six guns, occupied a village eight miles beyond Vouga bridge, called Albergaria Nova; the remainder of Mermet's infantry were at Grijon, one march in the rear, and on the main road to Oporto. Franceschi had that day informed Soult that the allied forces were collecting on the Mondego, and that Trant's posts had closed upon the Vouga; he was, however, far from suspecting that the whole army was upon the last river, although, from the imprudent conversation of an English officer, bearing a flag of truce, he had reason to expect an attack of some kind.

Sir Arthur Wellesley's plan was partly arranged upon the suggestion of the field officer who had met D'Argenton. He had observed, during his intercourse with the conspirators, that the lake of Ovar was unguarded by the French, although it extended twenty miles behind their outposts, and all the boats were at Aveiro, which was in possession of the allies. On this information, it was decided to turn the enemy's right by the lake. Accordingly, General Hill embarked on the evening of the 9th, with one brigade—the other being to follow him as quickly as possible. The fishermen looked on at first with surprise, but, soon comprehending the object, voluntarily rushed in crowds to the boats, and worked with such a will that the whole flotilla arrived at Ovar precisely at sunrise on the 10th, when the troops immediately disembarked. That day, also, Beresford, having rallied Wilson's corps upon his own, reached Pezo de Ragoa; and he it was that had repulsed Loison and pursued him to Amarante.

Both flanks of the French army were now turned, and at the same moment Sir Arthur, with the main body, fell upon Frances-

chi; for while the flotilla was navigating the lake of Ovar, the attempt to surprise that General at Albergaria Nova was in progress. Sherbrooke's division was not yet up; but General Cotton, with the light cavalry, crossing the Vouga a little after midnight, endeavored to turn the enemy's left, and get behind him while the head of Paget's division, marching a little later, passed through the defiles of Vouga, directly upon Albergaria. Trant's corps was to make way between Paget's division and the lake of Aveiro.

This enterprise, so well conceived, was baffled by petty events, such as always abound in war. Sir Arthur Wellesley did not perfectly know the ground beyond the Vouga, and late in the evening of the 9th, Colonel Trant, having ascertained that an impracticable ravine, extending from the lake to Olivera de Azemiz, would prevent him from obeying his orders, passed the bridge of Vouga, and carried his own guns beyond the defiles—thinking thus to leave the bridge clear for the British artillery and Richard Stewart's brigade, which had been charged to conduct the British cannon. This task was difficult; several carriages broke down, and Trant's corps took the lead of Paget's column, the march of which was impeded by the broken gun-carriages. Meanwhile the cavalry under Cotton were misled by the guides, and came, in broad daylight, upon Franceschi, who, with his flank resting upon a wood garnished with infantry, boldly offered a battle that Cotton dared not, under such circumstances, accept. Thus, an hour's delay, produced by a few trifling accidents, marred a combination that would have shorn Soult of a third of his infantry and all his light cavalry; for it is not to be supposed that, when Franceschi's horsemen were cut off, and General Hill at Ovar, Mermet's division could have escaped across the Douro.

When Sir Arthur Wellesley came up to Albergaria with Paget's infantry, Franceschi was still in position, skirmishing with Trant's corps, and evidently ignorant of what a force was advancing against him; but being immediately attacked, and his foot dislodged from the wood, he retreated along the road to Olivera de Azemis, briskly pursued by the allied infantry. Nevertheless, valiantly extricating himself from this perilous situation, he reached Olivera without any serious loss, and continuing his march during the night by Feria, joined Mermet next morning at Grijon.

Franceschi, in the course of the 10th, could see the whole of the English army, including the troops with Hill, and it may create surprise that he should pass so near the latter General without being attacked; but Hill was strictly obedient to his orders, which forbade him to act on the enemy's rear; and those orders were wise and prudent, because the principle of operating with small bodies

on the flanks and rear of an enemy is vicious. While the number of men on the left of the Douro was unknown, it would have been rash to interpose a single brigade between the advanced guard and the main body of the French. The object of Hill's being sent to Ovar was, 1. That the line of march might be eased and the enemy's attention distracted; 2. That a division of fresh soldiers might be at hand to follow the pursuit, so as to arrive on the bridge of Oporto pell-mell with the flying enemy; and it was the soldier-like retreat of Franceschi that prevented the last object from being attained.

General Paget's division and the cavalry halted the night of the 10th at Olivera. Sherbrooke's division passed the Vouga later in the day, and remained in Albergaria. The next morning the pursuit was renewed, and the men, marching strongly, came up with the enemy about eight o'clock in the morning.

COMBAT OF GRIJON.

The French were posted across the road on a range of steep hills, a wood occupied with infantry covered their right flank, and their front was protected by a village and broken ground, but their left was ill-placed. The British troops came up briskly in one column, the head of which was instantly and sharply engaged. The 16th Portuguese regiment, then quitting the line of march, drove the enemy out of the wood covering his right, and at the same time the Germans, who were in the rear, bringing their left shoulders forward, without any halt or check, turned the other flank of the French. The latter immediately abandoned the position, and, being pressed in the rear by two squadrons of cavalry, lost a few killed and about a hundred prisoners. The heights of Carvalho gave them an opportunity to turn and check the pursuing squadrons, yet, when the British infantry, with an impetuous pace, again drew near, they fell back; and thus fighting and retreating, a blow and a race, wore the day away. During this combat, Hill was to have marched by the coast-road towards Oporto, to intercept the enemy's retreat; but, by some error in the transmission of orders, that General, taking the route of Feria, crossed Trant's line of march, and the time thus lost could not be regained.

The British halted at dark. The French passed the Douro in the night and destroyed the bridge, and all the heavy artillery and baggage still in Oporto were immediately sent off by this road to Amarante. Mermet, without halting, followed the same route as far as Vallonga and Baltar, having orders to secure all the boats and vigilantly to patrol up the right bank of the river; and Loison, his retreat from Pezo de Ragoa being unknown, was again

warned to hold the Tamega, as he valued the safety of the army. Finally, Soult having directed all the craft in the Douro in his front to be secured, and having placed guards at convenient points, resolved to hold Oporto during the 12th, that Lorge's dragoons and the different detachments might have time to concentrate at Amarante.

The Duke of Dalmatia's attention was now principally directed to the river in its course *below* the city, for the reports of his cavalry led him to believe that Hill's division had been disembarked at Ovar from the ocean, and he expected that the empty vessels would come round to effect a passage at the mouth of the Douro. Nevertheless, thinking that Loison still held Mezamfrio and Pezo with six thousand men, and knowing that three brigades occupied intermediate posts between Amarante and Oporto, he was satisfied that his retreat was secured, and thought there was no rashness in maintaining his position for another day. But the conspirators were busy. His orders were neglected or only half obeyed, and false reports of their execution made to him.

In this state of affairs the heads of the British columns arrived at Villa Nova, and before eight o'clock in the morning of the 12th, the whole army was concentrated there, yet hidden from Soult by the height upon which the convent of Sarea stood. The Douro rolled between the hostile forces, and the French, who had suffered nothing from the previous operations, could in two days take post behind the Tamega, from whence the retreat upon Bragança would be certain; and they might, in passing, defeat Beresford; for that General's force was feeble in numbers, in infancy as to organization, and the utmost Sir Arthur expected from it was that, vexing the French line of march, and infesting the road of Villa Real, it would oblige Soult to take the less accessible route of Chaves and retire to Galicia instead of Leon. This however could not happen unless the main body of the allies followed the French closely from Oporto, and as Soult at Salamanca would have been more formidable than ever, the ultimate object of the campaign and the immediate safety of Beresford's corps alike demanded that the Douro should be quickly passed. But how force the passage of a river, deep, swift, more than three hundred yards wide, and with ten thousand veterans guarding the opposite bank! Alexander the Great might have turned from it without shame!

The height of Sarea, round which the Douro came with a sharp elbow, prevented any view of the upper river from the town, and the Duke of Dalmatia, confident that all above the city was secure, took his station in a house westward of Oporto, whence he could

discern the whole course of the lower river to its mouth. Meanwhile, from the summit of Sarea, Sir A. Wellesley, with an eagle's glance, searched all the opposite bank and the city and country beyond it. He saw horses and baggage moving on the road to Vallonga, and the dust of columns in retreat, but no large body of troops near the river; the enemy's guards were few and distant from each other; his patrols neither numerous nor vigilant, and an auspicious negligence seemed to pervade his camp. Suddenly a large unfinished building, called the Seminary, caught the English General's eye. This isolated structure, having a short easy access from the river, was surrounded by a high wall, which, extending to the water on either side, inclosed an area sufficient for two battalions in order of battle; the only egress was by an iron gate opening on the Vallonga road, and the building itself commanded everything in its vicinity, except one mound, which was within cannon-shot, but too pointed to hold a gun. There were no French posts near, and the direct line of passage from the height of Sarea, across the river to the building, being to the right hand, was hidden from the troops in the town. Here, then, with a marvellous hardihood, Sir Arthur resolved, if he could find but one boat, to make his way, in the face of a veteran army and a renowned General.

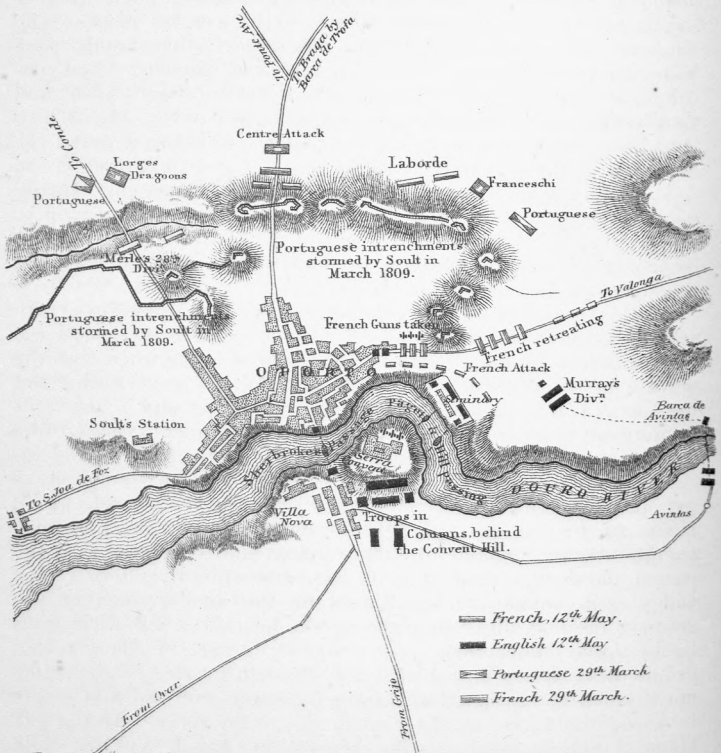
PASSAGE OF THE DOURO.

A poor barber, evading the French patrols, had during the night come over the water in a small skiff. Colonel Waters, a staff officer, a quick daring man, discovered this, and aided by the barber and by the Prior of Amarante, who gallantly offered his services, immediately passed the river, and in half an hour returned unperceived with three large barges. Meanwhile, eighteen pieces of artillery were got up to the convent of Sarea, and Major-General John Murray was directed, with the German brigade, some squadrons of the 14th dragoons, and two guns, upon the Barca de Avintas, three miles above. He had orders to seek for boats and effect a passage there also, if possible; and when Waters returned, some of the English troops were pushed towards Murray in support, while others cautiously approached the brink of the river under Sarea.

It was now ten o'clock; the French were still tranquil and unsuspecting; the British wondering and expectant. Sir Arthur was informed that one boat was brought up to the point of passage. "*Well, let the men cross,*" was his reply; and at this simple order, an officer with twenty-five soldiers of the Bluffs embarked, and in a quarter of an hour silently placed themselves in the midst of the enemy's army.

The Seminary was thus gained; all was quiet in Oporto, and a

Explanatory Sketch
OF THE PASSAGE OF THE RIVER DOURO
by
SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY
May 12th 1809.
AND OF THE STORMING OF OPORTO
by
MARSHAL SOULT
March 1809.



second boat followed the first; no hostile movement was seen, no sound heard, and a third boat passed higher up the river; but scarcely had the men from this last set foot on shore, when a tumultuous noise arose in the city. The drums beat to arms, shouts arose from all parts, the people were seen vehemently gesticulating and making signals from the houses; confused masses of French troops, hurrying forth from the streets by the higher grounds, threw out swarms of skirmishers that came furiously down against the Seminary. The British army instantly crowded to the bank of the river; Paget's and Hill's divisions collected at the point of passage, and Sherbrooke's division where the boat bridge had been cut away from Villa Nova. Paget himself had passed in the third boat, and having mounted the roof of the Seminary, was already struck down with a dangerous wound. Hill took his place. The musketry was sharp, voluble, and increasing as the numbers on both sides accumulated; but the French attack was eager and constant, their fire augmented faster than that of the English, and their artillery also began to play upon the building. The British guns from Sarea commanded indeed the whole inclosure round the Seminary, and swept the left of the wall in such a manner as to confine the French assault to the side of the iron gate; but Murray did not appear, and the struggle was so violent, and the moment so critical, that Sir Arthur himself was only prevented from crossing by the earnest representations of those about him, and the just confidence he had in General Hill.

At this period some citizens pushed over to Villa Nova with several great boats, Sherbrooke's people began to cross in large bodies, and at the same moment, a loud shout in the town, and the waving of handkerchiefs from all the windows, gave notice that the enemy had abandoned the lower part of the city. Murray's troops were now seen descending the right bank from Avintas, three battalions were in the Seminary, and Hill, advancing to the inclosure wall, opened a destructive fire upon the French columns, as they passed, in haste and confusion, by the Vallonga road. Five pieces of French artillery came galloping out from the town on the left, but, appalled by the terrible line of musketry to be passed, the drivers suddenly pulled up, and while thus hesitating, a volley from behind stretched most of the artillery-men on the ground; the rest, dispersing among the inclosures, left their guns on the road. This volley was given by a part of Sherbrooke's people, who, having forced their way through the streets, thus came upon the rear. In fine, the passage was won, and the allies were in considerable force on the French side of the river. To the left, General Sherbrooke, with the brigade of guards and the 29th

regiment, was in the town, and pressing the rear of the enemy, who were quitting it. In the centre, General Hill, holding the Seminary and the wall of the inclosure, with the Bluffs, the 48th, the 66th, the 16th Portuguese, and a battalion of detachments, sent a damaging fire into the masses as they passed him, and his line was prolonged on the right, although with a considerable interval, by General Murray's Germans, and two squadrons of the 14th dragoons. The remainder of the army kept passing the river at different points, and the artillery, from the height of Sarea, still searched the enemy's columns as they hurried along the line of retreat.

If General Murray had then fallen boldly in upon the disordered crowds, their discomfiture would have been complete; but he suffered column after column to pass him, without even a cannon shot, and seemed fearful lest they should turn and push him into the river. General Charles Stewart and Major Hervey, impatient of this timidity, charged with the two squadrons of dragoons, and riding over the enemy's rear-guard, as it was pushing through a narrow road to gain an open space beyond, unhorsed Laborde and wounded Foy; but on the English side Hervey lost an arm, and his gallant horsemen, receiving no support from Murray, had to fight their way back with loss. This finished the action; the French continued their retreat, and the British remained on the ground they had gained. The latter lost twenty killed, a general and ninety-five men wounded; the former had about five hundred men killed and wounded, and five pieces of artillery were taken in the fight; a considerable quantity of ammunition, and fifty guns (of which the carriages had been burnt) were afterwards found in the arsenal, and seven hundred men were captured in the hospitals.

Napoleon's veterans were so experienced, so inured to warfare, that no troops in the world could more readily recover from such a surprise, and before they reached Vallonga their columns were again in order, with a regular rear-guard covering the retreat; a small garrison at the mouth of the Douro which had been cut off, being guided by some friendly Portuguese, also rejoined the army in the night, and Soult, believing that Loison was at Amarante, thought he had happily escaped the danger.

Sir Arthur Wellesley employed the remainder of the 12th, and the next day, in bringing over the rear-guard of the army, the baggage, the stores, and the artillery. Murray's Germans indeed pursued on the morning of the 13th, but not further than about two leagues on the road of Amarante, and this delay has been blamed as an error in Sir Arthur. It is argued that an enemy once surprised should never be allowed to recover, and that Soult

should have been followed up, even while a single regiment was left to pursue. The reasons for halting were, first, that a part of the army was still on the left bank of the Douro; secondly, that the troops had outmarched provisions, baggage, and ammunition, and having passed over above eighty miles of difficult country in four days, during three of which they were constantly fighting, both men and animals required rest; thirdly, that nothing was known of Beresford, whose contemporary operations it is time to relate.

The moment of his arrival on the Douro was marked by the repulse of Loison's division, which immediately fell back, as I have already related, to Mezamfrio, but followed by the Portuguese patrols only, for Beresford halted on the left bank of the river, because the British regiments were still in the rear. This was on the 10th. Silveira, who was at Villa Real, had orders to feel towards Mezamfrio for the enemy, and the Marshal's force was thus, with the assistance of the insurgents, in readiness to turn Soult from the route of Villa Real to Bragança. The 11th Loison continued his retreat, and Beresford finding him so timid, followed and skirmished with his rear-guard; at the same time Silveira advanced from Villa Real. On the 12th, the French outposts in front of Amarante were driven in, and the 13th Loison abandoned that town, and took the route of Guimaraens. These events were unknown to Sir Arthur Wellesley on the evening of the 13th, but he heard that Soult, after destroying his artillery and ammunition, near Peñafiel, had passed over the mountains towards Braga, and judging this to arise from Beresford's operations on the Tamega, he reinforced Murray with some cavalry, ordering him to proceed by Peñafiel, and if Loison still lingered near Amarante, to open a communication with Beresford. The latter was at the same time directed to ascend the Tamega, and intercept the enemy at Chaves.

Meanwhile, the main body of the army marched in two columns upon the Minho, the one by the route of Barca de Troffa and Braga, the other by the Ponte d'Avé and Barcellos; but, on the evening of the 14th, the movements of the enemy about Braga gave certain proofs that not Valença and Tuy, but Chaves or Montalegre, would be the point of his retreat. Hereupon, the left column was drawn off from the Barcellos road and directed upon Braga, and Beresford was instructed to move by Monterey, upon Villa del Rey, if Soult should take the line of Montalegre. The 15th, Sir Arthur reached Braga. Murray was at Guimaraens on his right, and Beresford, who had anticipated his orders, was near Chaves, having sent Silveira towards Salamonde, with instructions to occupy the passes of Ruivaens and Melgasso. At this time, however, Soult was fifteen miles in advance of Braga, having, by

a surprising effort, extricated himself from one of the most dangerous situations that a general ever escaped from; but to understand this, it is necessary to describe the country through which his retreat was effected.

I have already stated, that the Sierra de Cabreira and the Sierra de Catalina line the right bank of the Tamega; but, in approaching the Douro, the latter slants off towards Oporto, leaving a rough but practicable slip of land, through which the road leads from Oporto to Amarante: hence, the French in retreating to the latter town had the Douro on their right hand and the Sierra de Catalina on their left, both supposed impassable; and although between Amarante and Braga, which is on the other side of the Catalina, a route practicable for artillery runs through Guimaraens, it was necessary to reach Amarante to fall into this road. Soult, therefore, as he advanced along the narrow pass between the mountains and the Douro, rested his hopes of safety entirely upon Loison's holding Amarante; several days, however, had elapsed since that General had communicated with the army, and an aide-de-camp was sent, on the morning of the 12th, to ascertain his exact position. Colonel Tholosé, the officer employed, found Loison at Amarante, but neither his remonstrances, nor the after-coming intelligence that Oporto was evacuated and the army in full retreat upon the Tamega, could induce that General to remain there; as we have seen, he marched towards Guimaraens on the 13th, abandoning the bridge of Amarante without a blow, and leaving his commander and two-thirds of the army to what must have appeared inevitable destruction.

The news of this unexpected calamity reached Soult at one o'clock on the morning of the 13th, just after he had passed the rugged banks of the Souza river; the weather was boisterous, the men were fatigued, voices were heard calling for a capitulation, and the whole army was stricken with dismay. Then it was that the Duke of Dalmatia justified, by his energy, that fortune which had raised him to his high rank in the world. Being, by a Spanish pedlar, informed of a path that, mounting the right bank of the Souza, led over the Sierra de Catalina to Guimaraens, he, on the instant, silenced the murmurs of the treacherous or fearful in the ranks, destroyed the artillery, abandoned the military chest and baggage, loaded the animals with sick men and musket ammunition, and repassing the Souza, followed his Spanish guide with a hardy resolution. The rain was falling in torrents, and the path was such as might be expected in those wild regions, yet the troops made good their passage over the mountains to Pombeira, and at Guimaraens happily fell in with Loison. During the night they

were joined by Lorge's dragoons from Braga, and thus, almost beyond hope, the whole army was concentrated.

If Soult's energy in command was conspicuous on this occasion, his sagacity and judgment were not less remarkably displayed in what followed. Most generals would have moved by the direct route from Guimaraens to Braga; but he, with a long reach of mind, calculated from the slackness of pursuit after he passed Val-longa, that the bulk of the English army must be on the road to Braga, and would be there before him; or that, at best, he should be obliged to retreat fighting, and must sacrifice the guns and baggage of Loison's and Lorge's corps in the face of an enemy—a circumstance that might operate fatally on the spirit of his soldiers, and would certainly give opportunities to the malcontents; and already one of the generals (apparently Loison) was recommending a convention like Cintra.* Wherefore, with a firmness worthy of the highest admiration, Soult destroyed all the guns and the greatest part of the baggage and ammunition of Loison's and Lorge's divisions; then, leaving the high road to Braga on his left, once more took to the mountain paths, making for the heights of Carvalho d'Este, where he arrived late in the evening of the 14th, thus gaining a day's march, in point of time. The morning of the 15th he drew up his troops in the position he had occupied two months before, at the battle of Braga; and by this spectacle, where twenty thousand men were collected upon the theatre of a former victory, and disposed so as to produce the greatest effect, he aroused all the sinking pride of the French soldiers. It was a happy reach of generalship, an inspiration of real genius!

He now reorganized his army, taking the command of the rear-guard himself, and giving that of the advanced guard to General Loison. Noble, the French historian of this campaign, says, "*the whole army was astonished;*" as if it were not a stroke of consummate policy, that the rear, which was pursued by the British, should be under the General-in-chief, and that the front, which was to fight its way through the native forces, should have a commander whose very name called up all the revengeful passions of the Portuguese. *Maneta dared not surrender!* and thus the Duke of Dalmatia dexterously forced those to act with most zeal who were least inclined to serve him; but in sooth, such was his perilous situation, that all the resources of his mind and all the energy of his character were needed to save the army.

From Carvalho he retired to Salamonde, from whence there were two lines of retreat: the one through Ruivaens and Venda Nova, by which the army had marched when coming from Chaves

* Noble's Campagne de Galice.

two months before ; the other, shorter, although more impracticable, leading by the Ponte Nova and Ponte Miserella into the road running from Ruivaens to Montalegre. But the scouts brought intelligence that the bridge of Ruivaens, on the little river of that name, was broken, and defended by twelve hundred Portuguese, with artillery, and that another party had been, since the morning, destroying the Ponte Nova on the Cavado river. The destruction of the first bridge blocked the road to Chaves ; the second, if completed, and the passage well defended, would have cut the French off from Montalegre. The night was setting in, the soldiers were harassed, barefooted, and starving ; the ammunition was injured by the rain, which had never ceased since the 13th, and which was now increasing in violence, accompanied with storms of wind ; the British army would certainly fall upon the rear in the morning ; and if the Ponte Nova, where the guard was reported to be weak, could not be secured, the hour of surrender was surely arrived. In this extremity, Soult sent for Major Dulong, an officer justly reputed for one of the most daring in the French ranks. Addressing himself to this brave man, he said, "I have chosen you from the whole army to seize the Ponte Nova, which has been cut by the enemy. Select a hundred grenadiers and twenty-five horsemen, endeavor to surprise the guards, and secure the passage of the bridge. If you succeed, say so, but send no other report ; your silence will suffice." Thus exhorted, and favored by the storm, Dulong reached the bridge unperceived of the Portuguese, killed the sentinel before any alarm was given, and then, followed by twelve grenadiers, began crawling along a narrow slip of masonry, which was the only part undestroyed. The Cavado river was flooded and roaring in its deep channel, one of the grenadiers fell into the gulf, but the noise of the waters was louder than his cry, and Dulong with the eleven reaching the other side surprised the nearest post ; the remainder of his men advanced at the same moment close to the bridge, and some crossing and others mounting the heights, shouting and firing, scared the poor peasantry, who imagined the whole army was upon them ; thus the passage was gallantly won.

At four o'clock, the bridge was repaired and the advanced guards of the French commenced crossing ; but the column of march was long, the road narrow and rugged, the troops filed over slowly, and beyond the Ponte Nova there was a second obstacle still more formidable. For the pass in which the troops were moving being cut in the side of a mountain, open on the left for several miles, at last came upon a torrent called the Miserella, which, breaking down a deep ravine, or rather gulph, was only to be crossed by a bridge constructed with a single lofty arch, called *Saltador*, or the leaper,

and so narrow that only three persons could pass abreast. Fortunately for the French, the Saltador was not cut, but intrenched and defended by a few hundred Portuguese peasants, who occupied the rocks on the farther side, and here the good soldier Dulong again saved the army;* for, when a first and second attempt had been repulsed, he carried the intrenchments by a third effort, and, at the same instant, fell deeply wounded. The head of the column then poured over, and it was full time, for the English guns were thundering in the rear, and the Ponte Nova was choked with dead.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, quitting Braga on the morning of the 16th, had come, about four o'clock, upon Soult's rear-guard, which remained at Salamonde to cover the passage of the army over the bridges. The right was strongly protected by a ravine, the left occupied a steep hill, and a stout battle might have been made; but men thus circumstanced, and momentarily expecting an order to retreat, will seldom stand firmly; on this occasion, when some light troops turned the left, and General Sherbrooke, with the guards, mounting the steep hill, attacked the front, the French made but one discharge, and fled in confusion to the Ponte Nova. As this bridge was not on the direct line of retreat, they were for some time unperceived, and gaining ground of their pursuers, formed a rear-guard; yet being at last descried, some guns were brought to bear on them, and then man and horse, crushed together, went over into the gulph, and the bridge, and the rocks, and the defile beyond were strewed with mangled bodies. This was the last calamity inflicted by the sword upon the French army in this retreat; a retreat attended by many horrid as well as glorious events; for the peasants in their fury, with an atrocious cruelty, tortured and mutilated every sick man and straggler that fell into their power, and on the other hand, the soldiers, who held together in their turn, shot the peasants, while the track of the columns might be discovered from afar by the smoke of the burning houses.

The French reached Montalegre on the 17th, being followed only by Colonel Waters, with some cavalry, who picked up a few stragglers at Villella. Sir Arthur halted that day at Ruivaens, which seems to have been an error in principle, because there appears no adequate cause for the delay, but on the 18th he renewed the pursuit, and a part of his cavalry passed Montalegre, followed by the guards; the enemy was, however, drawn up behind the Salas in force, and no action took place. Silveira, indeed, had entered Montalegre, from the side of Chaves, before the British came up from Ruivaens; but instead of pursuing, he put his men into quarters; and a Portuguese officer of his division, who was despatched to Mar-

* S. Journal of Operations, MS.

shal Beresford with orders to move from Villa Perdrices upon Villa del Rey, loitered on the road so long, that all chance of intercepting the French line of march was at an end; for though Beresford, on the 19th, sent Colonel Talbot with the 14th dragoons as far as Ginjo, Franceschi turned in force and obliged that officer to retire, and the pursuit terminated with the capture of a few stragglers on the Salas.

Soult himself crossed the frontier by Allaritz on the 18th, and on the 19th entered Orense, without guns, stores, ammunition, or baggage; his men were exhausted with fatigue and misery, the greatest part without shoes, many without accoutrements, and, in some instances, even without muskets. He had quitted Orense seventy six days before, with about twenty-two thousand men, and three thousand five hundred had afterwards joined him from Tuy. He returned with nineteen thousand five hundred, having lost by the sword and sickness, by assassination and capture, six thousand good soldiers; of which number above three thousand were taken in hospitals,* and about a thousand were killed by the Portuguese, or had died of sickness, previous to the retreat; the remainder were captured or had perished within the last eight days. He had carried fifty-eight pieces of artillery into Portugal, and he returned without a gun; yet was his reputation as a stout and able soldier nowise diminished.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Duke of Dalmatia's arrangements being continually thwarted by the conspirators, his military skill cannot be fairly judged of; nevertheless the errors of the campaign may, without injustice, be pointed out, leaving to others the task of tracing them to their true sources.

1. The disposition of the army, on both sides of the Douro and upon such extended lines, when no certain advice of the movements and strength of the English force had been received, was rash. It was, doubtless, right, that to clear the front and to gather information, Franceschi should advance to the Vouga; but he remained too long in the same position, and he should have left Trant's force more positively. Had the latter officer (whose boldness in maintaining the line of the Vouga was extremely creditable) been beaten, as he easily might have been, the anarchy of the country would have increased; and as Boresford's troops at Thomar wanted but an excuse to disperse, the Portuguese and British preparations must have been greatly retarded.

2. That Soult, when he had secured, as he thought, all the boats

* Viz. 1800 left in Viana and Braga; 500 including the wounded taken in Oporto; 1800 taken at Chaves, by Silveira.