

and Laval close on his own left flank ; but La Peña he could see nowhere. In this desperate situation, he felt that to retreat upon Bermeja, and thus bring the enemy pell-mell with the allies on to that narrow ridge, must be disastrous ; wherefore, without a moment's hesitation, he resolved to attack, although the key of the field of battle was already in the enemy's possession.

Ten guns, under Major Duncan, instantly opened a terrific fire against Laval's column, while Colonel Andrew Barnard, with the riflemen and the Portuguese companies, running vehemently out on the left, commenced the fight ; the remainder of the British troops, without any attention to regiments or brigades, so sudden was the affair, formed two masses, one of which under General Dilkes marched hastily against Ruffin, and the other under Colonel Wheatley against Laval. Duncan's guns ravaged the French ranks, Laval's artillery replied vigorously, Ruffin's batteries took Wheatley's column in flank, and the infantry on both sides pressed forward eagerly, and with a pealing musketry. When near together, a fierce, rapid, prolonged charge of the British overthrew the first line of the French, and, notwithstanding its extreme valor, drove it in confusion over a narrow dip of ground upon the second, which was almost immediately broken in the same manner, and only the chosen battalions, hitherto posted on the right, remained to cover the retreat.

Meanwhile Brown had marched headlong against Ruffin. Nearly half of his detachment went down under the enemy's first fire ; yet he maintained the fight until Dilkes' column, which had crossed a deep hollow and never stopped even to re-form the regiments, came up, with little order indeed, but in a fierce mood, and then the whole ran up towards the summit ; there was no slackness on any side, and at the very edge of the ascent their gallant opponents met them. A dreadful, and for some time doubtful fight ensued ; but Ruffin and Chaudron Rousseau, commanding the chosen grenadiers, both fell mortally wounded, the English bore strongly onward, and their incessant slaughtering fire forced the French from the hill with the loss of three guns and many brave soldiers.

The discomfited divisions, retiring concentrically, soon met, and with infinite spirit endeavored to re-form and renew the action. The play of Duncan's guns, close, rapid, and murderous, rendered the attempt vain. Victor quitted the field of battle, and the British, having been twenty-four hours under arms without food, were too exhausted to pursue.

While these terrible combats of infantry were fighting, La Peña looked idly on, neither sending his cavalry, nor his horse-artillery. nor any part of his army to the assistance of his ally ; nor yet

menacing the right of the enemy, which was close to him and weak. The Spanish Walloon guards, the regiment of Ciudad Real, and some guerilla cavalry, indeed turned without orders, coming up just as the action ceased; and it was expected that Colonel Whittingham, an Englishman commanding a powerful body of horse, would have done as much; but no stroke in aid of the British was struck by a Spanish sabre that day, although the French cavalry did not exceed two hundred and fifty men, and it is evident that the eight hundred under Whittingham might, by sweeping round the left of Ruffin's division, have rendered the defeat ruinous. So certain, indeed, was this, that Colonel Frederick Ponsonby, drawing off the hundred and eighty German hussars belonging to the English army, reached the field of battle, and charging the French squadrons just as their retreating divisions met, overthrew them, took two guns, and even attempted, though vainly, to sabre Rousseau's chosen battalions.

Such was the fight of Barosa. Short, for it lasted only one hour and a half, but most violent and bloody; for fifty officers, sixty sergeants, and above eleven hundred British soldiers, and more than two thousand Frenchmen were killed and wounded; six guns, an eagle, two generals, (both mortally wounded,) together with four hundred other prisoners, fell into the hands of the victors.

After the action, Graham remained some hours on the height, still hoping that La Peña would awake to the prospect of success and glory, which the extreme valor of the British had opened. Four thousand men and a powerful artillery had come over the Santi Petri, and thus the Spanish General was at the head of twelve thousand infantry and eight hundred cavalry, all fresh troops; while before him were only the remains of the French line of battle retreating in the greatest disorder upon Chiclana. But all military feeling was extinct in La Peña, and as Graham could no longer endure such command, the morning of the 6th saw the British filing over the bridge into the Isla.\*

On the French side, Cassagne's reserve came up from Medina, and a council of war being held in the night of the 5th, Victor, although of a desponding nature, proposed another attack, but the suggestion being ill received, nothing was done. On the 6th, Admiral Keats, landing his seamen and marines, dismantled, with exception of Catalina, every fort from Rota to Santa Maria, and even obtained momentary possession of the latter place. This caused such confusion and alarm in the French camp, that the Duke of Belluno, leaving garrisons at the great points of his lines, and a rear-guard at Chiclana, retreated behind the San Pedro,†

\* Appendix 1, § 1.

† Abstract of Military Reports, MS.

where he expected to be immediately attacked. If La Peña had even then pushed to Chiclana, Graham and Keats were willing to make a simultaneous attack upon the Trocadero; yet the 6th and 7th passed without even a Spanish patrol following the French. On the 8th, Victor returned to Chiclana, whereupon La Peña recrossed the Santi Petri and destroyed the bridge; and his detachment on the side of Medina being thus cut off from the Isla, was soon afterwards obliged to retire to Algeiras.

All the passages in this extraordinary battle were so broadly marked, that observations would be useless. The contemptible feebleness of La Peña furnished a surprising contrast to the heroic vigor of Graham, whose attack was an inspiration rather than a resolution, so wise, so sudden was the decision, so swift, so conclusive was the execution. The original plan of the enterprise having been however rather rashly censured, some remarks on that head may be useful. "Sebastiani," it is said, "might, by moving on the rear of the allies, have crushed them, and they had no right to calculate upon his inactivity." This is a shallow criticism. Graham, weighing the natural dislike of one general to serve under another, judged that Sebastiani, harassed by insurrections in Granada, would not hastily abandon his own district, menaced as it was by insurrection, to succor Victor, before it was clear where the blow was to be struck. The distance from Tarifa to Chiclana was about fifty miles, whereas, from Sebastiani's nearest post to Chiclana, was above a hundred, and the real object of the allies could not be known until they had passed the mountains separating Tarifa from Medina. Combining these moral and physical considerations, Graham had reason to expect several days of free action; and thus indeed it happened, and with a worthy colleague he would have raised the blockade; more than that could scarcely have been hoped, as the French forces would have concentrated either before Cadiz or about Seville or Ecija; and they had still fifty thousand men in Andalusia.

Victor's attack on the 5th was well judged, well timed, and vigorous; with a few thousand more troops he alone would have crushed the allies. The unconquerable spirit of the English prevented this disaster, but if Graham or his troops had given way, or even hesitated, the whole army must have been driven like sheep into an inclosure; the Almanza creek on one side, the sea on the other, the Santi Petri to bar their flight, and the enemy hanging on their rear in all the fierceness of victory. Indeed, such was La Peña's misconduct, that the French, although defeated, gained their main point: the blockade was renewed, and it is remarkable that, during the action, a French detachment passed near

the bridge of Zuazo without difficulty, and brought back prisoners; thus proving that with a few more troops Victor might have seized the Isla. Meanwhile Ballesteros, who had gone against Seville, was chased, in a miserable condition, to the Aroche hills, by Daricau.

In Cadiz violent disputes arose. La Peña, in an address to the Cortes, claimed the victory for himself. He affirmed that all the previous arrangements were made with the knowledge and approbation of the English General, and the latter's retreat into the Isla he indicated as the real cause of failure. Lascy and General Cruz-Murgeon also published inaccurate accounts of the action, and even had deceptive plans engraved to uphold their statements. Graham, stung by these unworthy proceedings, exposed the conduct of La Peña in a letter to the British envoy; refused with disdain the title of grandee of the first class voted to him by the Cortes; and when Lascy used some expressions relative to the action personally offensive, he enforced an apology with his sword. But having thus shown himself superior to his opponents at all points, the gallant old man soon afterwards relinquished his command to General Cooke, and joined Lord Wellington's army.

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### CHAPTER III.

Siege of Badajos continued—Imas surrenders—His cowardice and treachery—Albuquerque and Valencia de Alcantara taken by the French—Soult returns to Andalusia—Relative state of the armies at Santarem—Retreat of the French—Massena's able movement—Skirmish at Pombal—Combat of Redinha—Massena halts at Condeixa—Montbrun endeavors to seize Coimbra—Baffled by Colonel Trant—Condeixa burnt by the French—Combat of Casal Nova—General Cole turns the French flank at Panella—Combat of Foz d'Aronce—Massena retires behind the Alva.

WHILE discord prevailed at Cadiz, nearly the whole of Andalusia was disturbed by insurrections of the peasantry; nevertheless, such was Soult's resolution, the siege of Badajos continued. Early in March, the second parallel being completed, and the Pardaleras taken into the works, the approaches were carried by sap to the covered way, and mines were prepared to blow in the counterscarp. However, Rafael Menacho, the Governor, was in no manner dismayed; his sallies were frequent and vigorous, his activity and courage inspired his troops with confidence, he had begun to retrench in the streets behind the part attacked, the fire of the besiegers was inferior to that of the besieged, and everything seemed to



promise favorably, when on the evening of the 2d, during a sally, in which the nearest French batteries were carried, the guns spiked, and trenches partly ruined, Menacho was killed, and the command fell to Imas, a man so unworthy that a worse could not anywhere be found. The spirit of the garrison then died away, the besiegers' works advanced rapidly, the ditch was passed, a lodgment was made on one of the ravelins, the rampart was breached, and the fire of the besieged being nearly extinguished, on the 10th of March the place was summoned in a peremptory manner.

At this time, the great crisis of the campaign having passed, a strong body of British and Portuguese troops were ready to raise the siege of Badajos. In three different ways, by telegraph, by a letter, and by a confidential messenger, the governor was informed, that Massena was in full retreat and that the relieving army was actually in march. The breach was still impracticable, provisions were plentiful, the garrison above eight thousand strong, the French army reduced by sickness, by detachments and the previous operations, to less than fourteen thousand men.\* Imas read the letter, and instantly surrendered, handing over at the same moment the intelligence thus obtained to the enemy. He also demanded that his grenadiers should march out of the breach; it was granted, and he was obliged to enlarge the opening himself ere they could do so! Yet this man, so covered with opprobrium, and who had secured his own liberty while consigning his fellow soldiers to a prison, and his own character to infamy, was never punished by the Spanish rulers: Lord Wellington's indignant remonstrances forced them, indeed, to bring him to trial, but they made the process last during the whole war.

When the place fell, Mortier marched against Campo Mayor, and Latour Maubourg, seizing Albuquerque and Valencia d'Alcantara, made six hundred prisoners; but Soult alarmed by the effects of the battle of Barosa, returned to Andalusia. He had, in fifty days, mastered four fortresses and invested a fifth; he had killed or dispersed ten thousand men, and taken twenty thousand with a force which, at no time, exceeded the number of his prisoners. Yet great and daring and successful as his operations had been, the principal object of his expedition was frustrated, for Massena was in retreat! Lord Wellington's combinations had palsied the hand of the conqueror!

While the siege of Badajos was proceeding, no change took place in the main positions of either army at Santarem. The French General had been encouraged to maintain his ground by the state of the Portuguese army, which he hoped would break up the alli-

\* Lord Wellington's Despatch.

ance; for such had been the conduct of the Regency, that the native troops were starving in their own country, while the British were well fed, and the deserters from the former, without knowing the cause, had a story, as true as it was pitiable, to tell of their miseries. The English General, certain that the French, who were greatly reduced by sickness, must soon quit their ground if he could relieve Badajos, only waited for his reinforcements to send Beresford with fourteen thousand men against Soult; but the battle of the Gebora ruined this plan and changed his situation. The arrival of the reinforcements could not then enable him to detach a sufficient number of men to relieve Badajos, and it was no longer a question of starving Massena, but of beating him before Soult could take Badajos and the two armies be joined. Wherefore he resolved to post ten thousand men before the hill of Santarem to hold Reynier in check; to make Beresford cross the Tagus at Abrantes, and fall on Massena's rear; and meanwhile moving himself with the rest of the army by Rio Mayor and Tremes, to force back the French centre and right, and cutting off their left, to drive it into the Tagus. But nothing could be attempted until the troops from England arrived, and day after day passed in vain expectation of their coming. Being embarked in January, they would have reached Lisbon before the end of that month, if Sir Joseph Yorke, the Admiral, had taken advantage of a favorable wind, which blew when the troops were first put on board; he however neglected this opportunity, contrary gales followed, and the ordinary voyage of ten days was prolonged for six weeks.

On the other hand, the French General's situation was becoming very perilous. To besiege Abrantes was above his means, and although that fortress was an important strategic point for the allies who had a movable bridge, it would not have been so for the French. Massena could only choose, then, to force the passage of the Tagus alone, or to wait until Soult appeared on the left bank, or to retreat. For some time he seemed inclined to the first, showing great jealousy of the works opposite the mouth of the Zézere, and carrying his boats on wheel-carriages along the banks of the Tagus, as if to alarm Beresford and oblige him to concentrate to his left: yet that General relaxed nothing of his vigilance, neither spy nor officer passed his lines of observation, and Massena knew, generally, that Soult was before Badajos, but nothing more. However, time wore away, sickness wasted the army, food became daily scarcer, the organization of the troops was seriously loosened, the leading generals were at variance, and the conspiracy to put St. Cyr at the head of the army in Spain was by no means relinquished.

Under these accumulating difficulties even Massena's obstinacy

gave way; he promised to retreat when he had no more provisions left than would serve his army for the march. A tardy resolution, yet adopted at the moment when to maintain his position was more important than ever, as ten days longer at Santarem would have insured the co-operation of Soult. General Pelet says, that the latter Marshal, by engaging in the siege of Badajos and Olivenza, instead of coming directly down upon the Tagus, was the cause of Massena's failure. This can hardly be sustained. Before those sieges and the battle of the Gebora, Mendizabel could have assembled twenty thousand men on Soult's rear, and there was a large body of militia on the Ponçul and the Elga; Beresford had fourteen thousand British and Portuguese regulars, besides ordenanza; and the infinite number of boats at Lord Wellington's command would have enabled him to throw troops upon the left bank of the Tagus, with a celerity that would have baffled any effort of Massena to assist the Duke of Dalmatia. Now, if the latter had been defeated, with what argument could he have defended his reputation as a general, after having left three or four garrisoned fortresses and thirty-five thousand men upon his flank and rear; to say nothing of the results threatened by the battle of Barosa? The true cause of Massena's failure was the insufficiency of his means to oppose the English General's combinations. The French army, reduced by sickness to forty thousand fighting men, exclusive of Drouet's troops at Leiria, would have been unable to maintain its extended position against the attack meditated by Lord Wellington; and when Massena, through the means of the fidalgos, knew that the English reinforcements were come, he prepared to retreat. Those troops landed the 2d of March, and, on the 6th, the French had evacuated the position of Santarem.

At this time Napoleon directed the armies of Spain to be remodelled.\* The King's force was diminished, the army of the south increased; General Drouet was ordered to march with eleven thousand men to the fifth corps, which he was appointed to command, in place of Mortier; the remainder of the ninth corps was to compose two divisions, under the command of Clausel and Foy, and to be incorporated with the army of Portugal. Marmont was appointed to relieve Ney in the command of the sixth corps; Loison was removed to the second corps; Bessières was ordered to post six thousand men at Ciudad Rodrigo, to watch the frontiers of Portugal and support Claparede. Of the imperial guards, seven thousand were to assemble at Zamora, to hold the Gallicians in check, and the remainder at Valladolid, with strong parties of cavalry in the space between those places, that intelligence of what was passing

\* Muster Rolls of the French Army.

in Portugal might be daily received. Thus Massena was enabled to adopt any operation that might seem good to him, without reference to his original base; but the order for the execution of these measures did not reach the armies until a later period.

#### RETREAT OF THE FRENCH FROM SANTAREM.

Several lines of operation were open to the Prince of Esling. 1. He could pass the Tagus, between Punhete and Abrantes, by boats, or by fords which were often practicable after a week of dry weather. 2. He could retire, by the Sobreira Formosa, upon Castello Branco, and open a communication with the King by Placencia, and with the Duke of Dalmatia by Alcantara. 3. He could march, by the Estrada Nova and Belmonte, to Sabugal, and afterwards act according to circumstances. 4. He could gain the Mondego, and ascend the left bank of that river towards Guarda and Almeida; or, crossing it, march upon Oporto through an untouched country. Of these four plans, the first was perilous, and the weather too unsettled to be sure of the fords. The second and third were difficult, from the ruggedness of the Sobreira, and exposed, because the allies could break out by Abrantes upon the flank of the army while in retreat. Massena decided on the last, although his actual position being to the left of the line of retreat, he was necessarily forced to make a flank movement, with more than ten thousand sick men and all his stores, under the beard of an adversary, before he could begin his retreat. Yet this he executed, and in a manner befitting a great commander.

Commencing his preparations by destroying munition, and all guns that could not be horsed, he passed his sick and baggage, by degrees, upon Thomar, keeping only his fighting men in the front, and at the same time indicating an intention of passing the Zezere. But when the impediments of the army had gained two marches, Ney suddenly assembled the sixth corps and the cavalry on the Lys, near Leiria, as if with the intention of advancing against Torres Vedras, a movement that necessarily kept Lord Wellington in suspense. Meanwhile, the second and eighth corps, quitting Santarem, Tremes and Alcanhete, in the night of the fifth, fell back by Pernes upon Torres Novas and Thomar, destroying the bridges on the Alviella behind them. The next morning the boats were burnt at Punhete, and Loison retreated by the road of Espinhal to cover the flank of the main line of retreat, while the remainder of the army, by rapid concentric marches, made for a position in front of Pombal. The line of movement to the Mondego was thus secured, and four days gained; for Lord Wellington, although aware that a retreat was in progress of execution, was quite unable

in 1911, the first year of the new century, the population of the United States was 92,228,496. This was an increase of 25,000,000 over the population of 1870, and an increase of 100 per cent over the population of 1800. The increase of population has been rapid and continuous, and it is expected that it will continue to increase at the same rate for many years to come.

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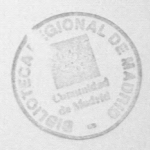
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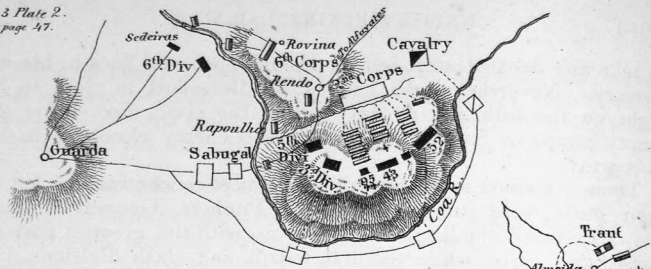
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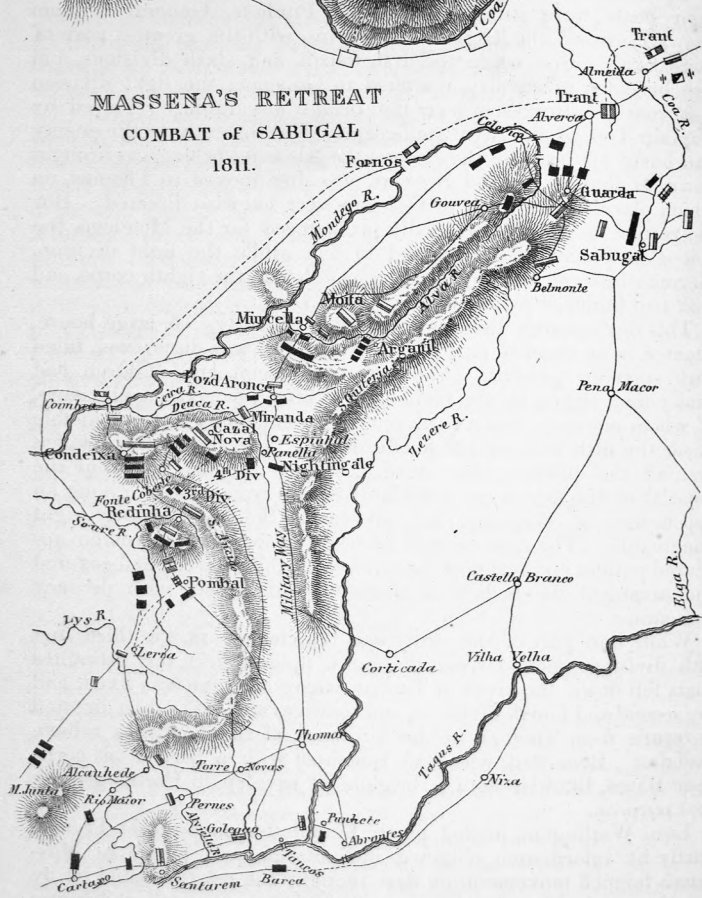
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**MASSENA'S RETREAT**  
**COMBAT OF SABUGAL**  
1811.



Drawn by Genl. Napier.



to take any decided step, lest he should open the lines to his adversary. Nevertheless he had caused Beresford to close to his right on the fifth, and at daylight on the sixth, discovering the empty camps of Santarem, followed the enemy closely with his own army.

Thomar seemed to be the French point of concentration; but as their boats were still maintained at Punhete, General William Stewart crossed the Tagus at Abrantes, with the greatest part of Beresford's corps, while the first, fourth, and sixth divisions, and two brigades of cavalry, marched to Golegao; the light division also reached Pernes, where the bridge was rapidly repaired by Captain Tod, of the royal staff-corps. The seventh, as the enemy had burnt his boats on the Zezere, the Abrantes bridge was brought down to that river, and Stewart, crossing, moved to Thomar, on which place the divisions at Golegao were likewise directed. But the retreat being now decidedly pronounced for the Mondego, the troops at Thomar were ordered to halt, while the light division, German hussars, and royal dragoons followed the eighth corps, and took two hundred prisoners.

This day's march disclosed a horrible calamity. A large house, situated in an obscure part of the mountains, was discovered, filled with starving persons. Above thirty women and children had sunk; and, sitting by the bodies, were fifteen or sixteen survivors, of whom one only was a man, but all so enfeebled as to be unable to eat the little food we had to offer them. The youngest had fallen first, all the children were dead. None were emaciated, but the muscles of the face were invariably drawn transversely, giving an appearance of laughing, and presenting the most ghastly sight imaginable. The man seemed most eager for life, the women appeared patient and resigned; and, even in this distress, had covered and arranged the bodies of those who first died, with decency and care.

While one part of the army was thus in pursuit, the third and fifth divisions moved from the lines, upon Leiria, the Abrantes boats fell down the river to Tancos, where a bridge was fixed, and the second and fourth divisions, and some cavalry, were then directed to return from Thomar to the left bank of the Tagus, to relieve Badajoz. Beresford, who had remained with a part of his corps near Barca, likewise sent a brigade of cavalry to Portalegre for that purpose.

Lord Wellington, misled partly by a letter of General Trant's, partly by information obtained in Santarem, and partly by Massena's feigned movement, at first thought the retreat would be by the Puente de Murcella; but on the 8th he was convinced it was

directed towards Coimbra, and on the 9th, the enemy, instead of continuing his retreat, concentrated the sixth and eighth corps and Montbrun's cavalry on a table land, in front of Pombal, where the light division skirmished with his advanced posts, and the German horse charged his cavalry with success, taking some prisoners. Here, finding the French disposed to accept battle, the English General was compelled to alter his plans. To fight with advantage, it was necessary to bring up, from Thomar, the troops destined to relieve Badajos. Not to fight, was to give up to the enemy Coimbra, and the untouched country behind, as far as Oporto: Massena would thus retire with the advantages of a conqueror. In this state of affairs, intelligence received from Badajos described that place as being in a sufficient state to hold out for a month. This decided the question.

The fourth division and the heavy cavalry, already on the march for the Alemtejo, were countermanded; General Nightingale, with a brigade of the first division and some horse, was directed by the road of Espinhal, to observe the second corps; and the rest of the army was concentrically directed upon Pombal. How dangerous a captain Massena could be, was here proved. His first movement began the 4th, it was the 11th before a sufficient number of troops could be assembled to fight him at Pombal, and, during these seven days, he had executed one of the most difficult operations in war, gained three or four marches, and completely organized his system of retreat. Had any rain fallen on the first day, the allies could not have followed him with artillery, such was the state of the roads; and he, having before sent off or destroyed all his guns except a few light pieces, would thus have had another great advantage.

#### SKIRMISH AT POMBAL.

Pack's brigade and the cavalry, the first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and light divisions, and the Portuguese troops, which were attached, like the Latin auxiliaries of the Roman legion, to each British division, were assembling in front of the enemy on the 10th; when Massena, who had sent his baggage over the Soure river in the night by the bridge of Pombal, suddenly retired through that town. He was closely followed by the light division, the streets were still encumbered, and Ney drawing up a rear-guard on a height behind the town, threw a detachment into the old castle of Pombal. He had, however, waited too long. The French army was moving in some confusion and in a very extended column of march, by a narrow defile, between the mountains and the Soure river, which was fordable, and the British divisions were in rapid motion along the

left bank, with the design of crossing lower down, and cutting Massena's line of retreat. The fall of night prevented this operation, but a sharp skirmish took place at Pombal, where the ninety-fifth and the third caçadores of the light division, after some changes of fortune, drove the French from the castle and town with such vigor, that they could not destroy the bridge, although it was mined. About forty of the allies were hurt, and the loss of the enemy was somewhat greater.

In the night Massena continued his retreat, which now assumed a regular and concentrated form. The baggage and sick, protected by the reserve cavalry, marched first; they were followed by the eighth corps, while the sixth, with some light cavalry, and the best horsed of the artillery, were destined to stem the pursuit. Ney had been ordered to detach Marcognet's brigade on the 10th, from the Lys, to seize Coimbra; but some delay having taken place, Montbrun was now appointed for that service, which was very important; for Lord Wellington's immediate object was to save Coimbra, and he designed, by skilful rather than daring operations, to oblige Massena to quit the Portuguese territory. The moral effect of such an event, he judged, would be sufficient for the general cause; but as his reinforcements were still distant, he was obliged to keep the fourth division and the heavy cavalry from the relief of Badajos, and was therefore willing to strike a sudden blow also, if a fair occasion offered. Howbeit, the country was full of strong positions, the roads hollow and confined by mountains on either hand; every village a defile; the weather was moderate and favorable to the enemy, and Ney, with a wonderfully happy mixture of courage, readiness, and skill, illustrated every league of ground by some signal combination of war.

Daybreak on the 12th saw both armies in movement, and eight miles of march, and some slight skirmishing, brought the head of the British into a hollow way, leading to a high table-land on which Ney had disposed five thousand infantry, a few squadrons of cavalry, and some light guns. His centre was opposite the hollow road, his wings were covered by wooded heights, which he occupied with light troops; his right rested on the ravine of the Soure; his left on the Redinha, which, circling round his rear, fell into the Soure. Behind him, the village of Redinha, situated in a hollow, covered a narrow bridge and a long and dangerous defile; and beyond the stream, some very rugged heights, commanding a view of the position in front of the village, were occupied by a division of infantry, a regiment of cavalry, and a battery of heavy guns, all so skilfully disposed as to give the appearance of a very considerable force.

## COMBAT OF REDINHA.

After examining the enemy's position for a short time, Lord Wellington directed the light division, now commanded by Sir William Erskine, to attack the wooded slopes covering Ney's right, and in less than an hour these orders were executed. The fifty-second, the ninety-fifth, and the caçadores, assisted by a company of the forty-third, carried the ascent and cleared the woods, and their skirmishers even advanced on to the open plain; but the French battalions, supported by four guns, immediately opened a heavy rolling fire, and at the same moment Colonel Ferriere, of the third French hussars, charged and took fourteen prisoners. This officer, during the whole campaign, never failed to break in upon the skirmishers in the most critical moments, sometimes with a squadron, sometimes with only a few men; he was always sure to be found in the right place, and was continually proving how much may be done, even in the most rugged mountains, by a small body of good cavalry.

Erskine's line, consisting of five battalions of infantry and six guns, being formed in such a manner that it outflanked the French right, tending towards the ford of the Redinha, was now reinforced with two regiments of dragoons, and meanwhile Picton seized the wooded heights protecting the French left. Thus Ney's position was laid bare. Nevertheless, that Marshal, observing that Lord Wellington, deceived as to his real numbers, was bringing the mass of the allied troops into line, far from retreating, even charged Picton's skirmishers, and continued to hold his ground with an astonishing confidence if we consider his position; for the third division was nearer to the village and bridge than his right, and there were already cavalry and guns enough on the plain to overwhelm him. In this posture, both sides remained for about an hour, when three shots were fired from the British centre as a signal for a forward movement, and suddenly a most splendid spectacle of war was exhibited. The woods seemed alive with troops, and in a few moments thirty thousand men, forming three gorgeous lines of battle, were stretched across the plain, bending on a gentle curve, and moving majestically onwards, while horsemen and guns, springing forward simultaneously from the centre and from the left wing, charged under a general volley from the French battalions; the latter were instantly hidden by the smoke, and when that cleared away no enemy was to be seen!

Ney, keenly watching the progress of this grand formation, had opposed Picton's foremost skirmishers with his left, and, at the same moment, withdrew the rest of his people with such rapidity, that

he gained the village ere the cavalry could touch him; the utmost efforts of Picton's skirmishers and of the horse-artillery, scarcely enabled them to gall the hindmost of the French with their fire. One howitzer was, indeed, dismounted close to the bridge, but the village of Redinha was in flames behind it, and the Marshal, wishing to confirm the courage of his soldiers, at the commencement of the retreat, in person, superintended the carrying it off, which he effected; yet with the loss of fifteen or twenty men, and with great danger to himself, for the British guns were thundering on his rear, and the light troops of the third division, chasing like heated blood-hounds, passed the river almost at the same time with the French. The reserves of the latter then cannonaded the bridge from the heights beyond, but a fresh disposition of attack being made by Lord Wellington, while the third division continued to press the left, Ney fell back upon the main body which was at Condeixa, ten miles in the rear.

The British had twelve officers and two hundred men killed and wounded in this combat, and the enemy lost as many; but he might have been utterly destroyed; for there is no doubt that the Duke of Elchingen remained a quarter of an hour too long upon his first position, and that, deceived by the skilful arrangement of his reserve, Lord Wellington paid him too much respect. Nevertheless, the extraordinary facility and precision with which the English General handled so large a force, was a warning to the French commander, and produced a palpable effect upon the after operations.

On the 13th, the allies renewed the pursuit, and before ten o'clock discovered the French army, the second corps, which was at Espinhal, excepted, in order of battle. The crisis of Massena's retreat had arrived; the defiles of Condeixa, leading upon Coimbra, were behind him; those of Miranda de Corvo, leading to the Puente de Murcella, were on his left; and in the fork of these two roads Ney was seated on a strong range of heights covered by a marsh, his position being only to be approached by the highway leading through a deep hollow against his right. Trees were felled to obstruct the passage, a palisado was constructed across the hollow, and breast-works were thrown up on each side. Massena here intended to stop the pursuit, while Montbrun seized Coimbra. His design was to pass the Mondego, and either capture Oporto or maintain a position between the Douro and the Mondego, until the operations of Soult should draw the British away, or until the advance of Bessières with the army of the north should enable himself again to act offensively.

Hitherto the French General had appeared the abler tactician,

out now his adversary assumed the superiority. When at Thomar, Lord Wellington, in expectation that Massena would cross the Mondego, had directed Baccellar to look to the security of Oporto, intending himself to follow the French with the utmost rapidity. He had also ordered Trant and Wilson to abandon the Mondego and Vouga rivers, the moment the fords should become passable, and retire across the Douro. They were also to break up the roads as they retreated, to remove all boats and means of transport, and to defend that river to extremity, that the army might have time to close upon the enemy's rear.

Wilson had been in observation of the Puente Murcella road, but hearing that the enemy were menacing an attack on Coimbra, he crossed the Mondego at Peña Cova, and thus, passing between the French parties, effected a junction with Trant. Then in pursuance of the orders above mentioned, both fell back, Wilson upon Busaco, and Trant towards the Vouga. But the latter, who had destroyed an arch of the bridge at Coimbra, and placed guards at the fords as far down as Figueras, soon returned with a part of his force, for the sound of guns had reached his outposts, the river was rising, and he felt assured that the allied army was close upon the heels of the enemy.

As early as the evening of the 11th, the French appeared at the suburb of Santa Clara, and a small party of their dragoons actually forded the Mondego at Pereiras that day. On the 12th, some French officers examined the bridge of Coimbra, but a cannon shot from the other side wounded one of them, and a general skirmish took place along the banks of the river, during which a party attempting to feel their way along the bridge, were scattered by a round of grape. The fords were, however, actually practicable for cavalry, and there were not more than two or three hundred militia and a few guns at the bridge, for Baccellar had obliged Trant again to withdraw the greatest part of his force on the 11th; nevertheless the latter opposed the enemy with the remainder, and it would appear that the French imagined the reinforcement, which reached Lisbon the 2d of March, had been sent by sea to the Mondego and was in Coimbra. This was an error. Coimbra was saved by the same man and the same militia that had captured it during the advance.\*

Montbrun sent his report to Massena early on the 13th, and the latter, too readily crediting his opinion of Trant's strength, relinquished the idea of passing the Mondego, and determined to retire by the Puente de Murcella. To insure the power of changing his front, and to secure his communication with Reynier and Loison,

\* Campagne des Français en Portugal.



he had carried Clausel's division to Fonte Coberta, a village about five miles on his left, situated at the point where the Anciao road falls into that leading to Murcella. There Loison rejoined him, and being thus pivoted on the Anciao Sierra, and covering the line of communication with the second corps, while Ney held Condeixa, he considered his position secure. The baggage was, however, observed filing off by the Murcella road when the allies first came upon Ney, and Lord Wellington instantly comprehending the state of affairs, as instantly detached the third division by a very difficult path over the Sierra de Anciao to turn the enemy's left.

For some time all appeared quiet in the French lines. Massena, in repairing to Fonte Coberta, had left Ney orders, it is said, to set fire to Condeixa at a certain hour, when all the divisions were simultaneously to concentrate at Casal Nova, in a second position, perpendicular to the first, and covering the road to Puente Murcella. Towards three o'clock, however, Picton was descried winding round the bluff end of a mountain, about eight miles distant, and as he was already beyond the French left, instant confusion pervaded their camp; a thick smoke arose from Condeixa, the columns were seen hurrying towards Casal Nova, and the British immediately pushed forward. The felled trees and other obstacles impeded their advance at first, and a number of fires, simultaneously kindled, covered the retreating troops with smoke, while the flames of Condeixa stopped the artillery; hence the skirmishers and some cavalry only could close with the rear of the enemy, but so rapidly as to penetrate between the divisions at Fonte Coberta and the rest of the French, and it is affirmed that the Prince of Esling, who was on the road, only escaped capture by taking the feathers out of his hat and riding through some of the light troops.

Condeixa being thus evacuated, the British cavalry pushed towards Coimbra, opened the communication with Trant, and cutting off Montbrun, took some of his horsemen. The rest of the army kindled their fires, and the light division planted piquets close up to the enemy, but the night was dark, and about ten o'clock the French divisions, whose presence at Fonte Coberta was unknown to Lord Wellington, stole out, and passing close along the front of the British posts, made for Miranda de Corvo. The noise of their march being heard, was imagined to be the moving of the French baggage to the rear, and was so reported to Sir William Erskine, whereupon that officer, concluding that their army was in full retreat, without any further inquiry, put the light division in march at daylight on the 14th.

## COMBAT OF CASAL NOVA.

The morning was so obscured that nothing could be descried at the distance of a hundred feet, but the sound of a great multitude was heard on the hills in front, and it being evident that the French were there in force, many officers represented the rashness of thus advancing without orders and in such a fog; nevertheless Erskine, with an astounding negligence, sent the fifty-second forward in a simple column of sections, without a vanguard or other precaution, and even before the piquets had come in from their posts. As the road dipped suddenly, descending into a valley, the regiment was immediately lost in the mist, which was so thick that the troops, unconsciously passing the enemy's outposts, had like to have captured Ney himself, whose bivouac was close to the piquets. The riflemen followed in a few moments, and the rest of the division was about to plunge into the same gulf, when the rattling of musketry and the booming of round shot were heard, and the vapor slowly rising, discovered the fifty-second on the slopes of the opposite mountains engaged, without support, in the midst of the enemy's army.

At this moment Lord Wellington arrived. His design had been to turn the left of the French, for their front position was very strong; and behind it they occupied the mountain ridges, in succession, to the Deuca river and the defiles of Miranda de Coryo. There was, however, a road leading from Condeixa to Espinhal, and the fourth division was already in march by it for Panella, having orders to communicate with Nightingale, to attack Reynier, and to gain the sources of the Deuca and Ceira rivers. Between the fourth division and Casal Nova the third division was more directly turning the enemy's left flank; and meanwhile the main body was coming up to the front, but as it marched in one column, it required time to reach the field. Howbeit Erskine's error forced on this action, and the whole of the light division were pushed forward to succor the fifty-second.

The enemy's ground was so extensive, and his skirmishers so thick and so easily supported, that, in a little time, the division was necessarily stretched out in one thin thread, and closely engaged in every part, without any reserve; nor could it even thus present an equal front, until Picton sent the riflemen of the sixtieth to prolong the line. Nevertheless, the fight was vigorously maintained amidst the numerous stone inclosures on the mountain side, some advantages were even gained, and the right of the enemy was partially turned; yet the main position could not be shaken, until Picton near, and Cole further off, had turned it by the left. Then,

the first, fifth, and sixth divisions, the heavy cavalry, and the artillery came up on the centre, and Ney commenced his retreat, covering his rear with guns and light troops, and retiring from ridge to ridge with admirable precision, and, for a long time, without confusion and with very little loss. Towards the middle of the day, however, the British guns and the skirmishers got within range of his masses, and the retreat became more rapid and less orderly; yet he finally gained the strong pass of Miranda de Corvo, which had been secured by the main body of the French. Here Montbrun rejoined the army. He had summoned Coimbra on the 13th at noon, and, without waiting for an answer, passed over the mountain and gained the right bank of the Deuca by a very difficult march.

The loss of the light division this day was eleven officers and a hundred and fifty men; that of the enemy was greater, and about a hundred prisoners were taken.

During the action of the 14th, Reynier, seeing the approach of the fourth division, hastily abandoned Panella, whereupon Cole, having effected a junction with Nightingale, passed the Deuca, and Massena fearing lest they should gain his rear, set fire to the town of Miranda, and passed the Ceira that night. His whole army was now compressed and crowded in one narrow line, between the higher sierras and the Mondego, and to lighten the march, he destroyed a greater quantity of ammunition and baggage. His encumbrances were, however, still so heavy, and the confusion in his army so great, that he directed Ney to cover the passage with a few battalions, charging him not to risk an action; but Ney, little regarding his orders, kept on the left bank ten or twelve battalions, a brigade of cavalry, and some guns, which produced the

#### COMBAT OF FOZ D'ARONCE.

The French right rested on some wooded and rugged ground, and their left upon the village of Foz d'Aronce, and the 15th, the weather was so obscure that the allies could not reach the Ceira before four o'clock in the evening; wherefore the troops, as they came up, proceeded to kindle fires for the night, thinking that as Ney's position was strong, nothing would be done. But Lord Wellington, having cast a rapid glance over it, directed the light division, and Pack's brigade, to hold the right in play, ordered the third division against the left, and at the same moment the horse-artillery, galloping forward to a rising ground, opened with a great and sudden effect. Ney's left wing being surprised and overthrown by the first charge of the third division, dispersed in a panic, and fled in such confusion towards the river, that some, missing the

fords, rushed into the deeps and were drowned, and others crowding on the bridge were crushed to death. On the right the ground was so rugged and close that the action resolved itself into a skirmish, and thus Ney was enabled to use some battalions to check the pursuit of his left; but meanwhile darkness came on, and the French troops in their disorder fired on each other. Only four officers and sixty men fell on the side of the British. The enemy's loss was not less than five hundred, of which one-half were drowned, and an eagle was afterwards found in the bed of the river when the waters subsided. In the night Massena retired behind the Alva; yet Ney, notwithstanding this disastrous combat, maintained the left bank of the Ceira, until every encumbrance had passed, and then blowing up seventy feet of the bridge, sent his corps on, remaining himself, with a weak rear-guard, on the right bank.

Thus terminated the first part of the retreat from Santarem, during which the French commander, if we except his errors with regard to Coimbra, displayed infinite ability, but withal a harsh and ruthless spirit. I pass over the destruction of Redinha, Condeixa, Miranda de Corvo, and many villages on the route; the burning of those towns covered the retrograde movements of the army, and something must be attributed to the disorder which usually attends a forced retreat: but the town of Leiria, and the convent of Alcobaca, were given to the flames by express orders from the French head-quarters;\* and, although the laws of war rigorously interpreted authorize such examples when the inhabitants take arms, it can only be justly done for the purpose of overawing the people, and not from a spirit of vengeance when abandoning the country. But every horror that could make war hideous attended this dreadful march! Distress, conflagrations, death, in all modes! from wounds, from fatigue, from water, from the flames, from starvation! On every side unlimited violence, unlimited vengeance! I myself saw a peasant hounding on his dog to devour the dead and dying, and the spirit of cruelty once unchained smote even the brute creation. On the 15th the French General, to diminish the encumbrances of his march, had ordered a number of beasts of burthen to be destroyed; the inhuman fellow, charged with the execution, hamstringed five hundred asses and left them to starve; and thus they were found by the British army on that day. The mute but deep expression of pain and grief, visible in these poor creatures' looks, wonderfully roused the fury of the soldiers, and so little weight has reason with the multitude, when opposed by a momentary sensation, that no quarter would have been given to any prisoner at that moment. A human feeling would thus have led to direct

\* Lord Wellington's Despatches.

cruelty. This shows how dangerous it is in war to listen to the passions at all, since the most praiseworthy could be thus perverted by an accidental combination of circumstances.

The French have, however, been accused of many crimes which they did not and could not commit; such as the driving of all women above ten years of age into their camp at Redinha, near which there were neither men nor women to be driven.\* The country was a desert! They have also been charged by the same writer with the mutilating John the First's body in the convent of Batalha, during Massena's retreat; but the body of that monarch had been wantonly pulled to pieces and carried off by British officers, during the retreat of the allies!

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#### CHAPTER IV.

Allies halt for provisions—State of the campaign—Passage of the Ceira—Passage of the Alva—Massena retires to Celerico—Resolves to march upon Coria—is prevented by Ney, who is deprived of his command and sent to France—Massena abandons Celerico and takes post at Guarda—The allies oblige the French to quit that position, and Massena takes a new one behind the Coa—Combat of Sabugal—Trant crosses the Coa and cuts the communication between Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo—His danger—He is released by the British cavalry and artillery—Massena abandons Portugal.

On the 16th the allies halted, partly because the Ceira was swollen and unfordable, partly from the extreme exhaustion of the troops who had suffered far greater privations than the enemy. The latter, following his custom, carried fifteen days' bread; the allies depended upon a commissariat, which broke down under the difficulties, not from any deficiency in Mr. Kennedy, the chief of the department, who was distinguished alike for zeal, probity, and talent; but from the ill conduct of the Portuguese government, who, deaf to the repeated representations of Lord Wellington and Beresford, would neither feed the Portuguese troops regularly while at Santarem, nor fill their magazines, nor collect the means of transport for the march. Hence, after passing Pombal, the greater part of the native force had been unable to continue the pursuit, and the brigades under General Pack and Colonel Ashworth, which did keep up and engaged daily with the enemy, were actually four days without food of any sort. Numbers died of inanition on the roads, and to save the whole from destruction, the British sup-

\* Southey, Peninsular war, Vol. III

plies were shared with them. The commissary-general's means were thus overlaid, the whole army suffered, and necessity obliged Lord Wellington to halt. Nevertheless he had saved Coimbra, forced the enemy into a narrow, intricate, and ravaged country, and, with an inferior force, turned him out of every strong position; and this, by a series of movements, based on the soundest principles of war. Noting the skill and tenacity with which Massena and Ney clung to every league of ground and every ridge defensible against superior numbers, he had seized the higher slopes of the mountains by Picton's flank march on the 13th, and again by Cole's on the 14th; and thus, continually menacing the passes in the rear of the French, obliged them to abandon positions which could scarcely have been forced. This method of turning the strength of the country to profit is the true key to mountain warfare; he who receives battle in the hills has always the advantage, and he who first seizes the important point chooses his own field of battle.

In saying an inferior force, I advert to the state of the Portuguese army and to Badajos; for when Lord Wellington had saved Coimbra, and seen that the French would not accept a general battle, except on very advantageous terms, he detached a brigade of cavalry, some guns, and a division of native infantry, from Condeixa, to the Alemtejo. And again in the night of the 13th, having received intelligence that Badajos had surrendered, and feeling all the importance of this event, he had detached the fourth division to the Alemtejo, for he designed that Beresford should immediately retake the lost fortress. Thus Lord Wellington had less than twenty-five thousand men in hand during the subsequent operations, but, as the road of Espinhal was the shortest line to the Tagus, General Cole, as we have seen, moved into it by Panella, thus threatening Massena's flank and rear at the same moment that he gained a march towards his ultimate destination. Meanwhile, Trant and Wilson with the militia, moving up the right bank of the Mondego, parallel to the enemy's line of retreat, forbade his foragers to pass that river, and were at hand either to interfere between him and Oporto, or to act against his flank and rear.

Such were the dispositions of the English General; but the military horizon was still clouded. Intelligence came from the north that Bessières, after providing for his government, had been able to draw together at Zamora about seven thousand men, and menaced an invasion of Gallicia, and, although Mahi had an army of sixteen thousand men, Lord Wellington anticipated no resistance. In the south, affairs were even more gloomy.\* The battle of Barosa, the disputes which followed, and the conduct of Imas and

\* Appendix 16, § 9, Vol. II.



Mendizabel, proved that, from Spain, no useful co-operation was ever to be expected. Mortier also had invested Campo Mayor, and it was hardly expected to hold out until Beresford arrived. The Spaniards, to whom it had been delivered, under an engagement of honor, entered into by Romana, to keep it against the enemy, had disloyally neglected and abandoned it at the very moment when Badajos fell; hence two hundred Portuguese militia, thrown in at the moment, had to defend this fortress, which required a garrison of five thousand regulars. Nor was the enemy immediately in the British front the last to be considered.

Ney withdrew from the Ceira in the evening of the 16th, and on the 17th the light division forded that river with great difficulty, while the rest of the army passed over a trestle bridge, made in the night by the staff-corps. The French were, however, again in position immediately behind the Alva, and on the Sierra de Moita, and they had destroyed the Ponte Murcella and the bridge near Pombeira; and the second corps had moved towards the upper part of the river, and Massena had spread his foraging parties to a considerable distance, designing to halt for several days. He was disturbed sooner than he expected; for the first, third, and fifth British divisions being directed on the 18th by the Sierra de Guiteria, made way over that rugged mountain with a wonderful perseverance and strength, and thus menaced the French left, while the 6th and the light divisions cannonaded their right on the lower Alva.

As the upper course of the river, now threatened by Lord Wellington's right, was parallel to the French line of retreat, Massena recalled the second corps, and, quitting the lower Alva also, concentrated on the Sierra de Moita, lest the divisions, moving up the river, should cross and fall on his troops while separated and in march. It then behoved the allies to concentrate also, lest the heads of their columns should be crushed by the enemy's masses. The Alva was deep, wide, and rapid, yet the staff-corps succeeded in forming a most ingenious raft-bridge, and the light division immediately passed between Ponte Murcella and Pombeira, and at the same time the right wing of the army entered Arganil, while Trant and Wilson closed on the other side of the Mondego. Massena then recommenced his retreat with great rapidity, and being desirous to gain Celerico and the defiles leading upon Guarda betimes, again destroyed baggage and ammunition, and abandoned even his more distant foraging parties, who were thus intercepted and taken, to the number of eight hundred, in returning to the Alva; for Lord Wellington, seeing the success of his combinations, had immediately directed all his columns upon Moita, and the whole

army was assembled there on the 19th. The pursuit was renewed the 20th, through Penhancos, but only with the light division and the cavalry; the communication was, however, again opened with Wilson and Trant, who had reached the bridge of Fornos, and with Silveira, who was about Trancoso. The third and sixth divisions followed in reserve, but the remainder of the army halted at Moita, until provisions sent by sea from Lisbon to the Mondego could come up to them. The French having reached Celerico the 21st, with two corps and the cavalry, immediately opened the communication with Almeida, by posting detachments of horse on the Pinhel; and at the same time Reynier, who had retired through Govea, occupied Guarda with the second corps.

Massena had now regained his original base of operations, and his retreat may be said to have terminated; yet he was far from wishing to re-enter Spain, where he could only appear as a baffled General, and shorn of half his authority, because Bessières commanded the northern provinces, which, at the commencement of the invasion, had been under himself. Hence, anxious to hold on to Portugal, and that his previous retreat might appear only a change of position, he formed the design of throwing all his sick men and other incumbrances into Almeida, then passing the Estrella at Guarda, to make a countermarch, through Sabugal and Peña Macor, to the Elga, and so establish a communication across the Tagus with Soult, and by the valley of the Tagus with the King.

But now the factions in his army had risen to such a height that he could no longer command the obedience of his lieutenants; Montbrun, Junot, Drouet, Reynier, and Ney were all at variance with each other and with him. The first had in the beginning of the retreat been requested to secure Coimbra, instead of which he quitted Portugal, carrying with him Claparede's division. Marcognet's brigade was then ordered for that operation, but it did not move, and finally, Montbrun undertook it, and failed as we have seen in default of vigor. Junot was disabled by his wound, but his faction did not the less show their discontent. Reynier's dislike to the Prince was so strong, that the officers carrying flags of truce, from his corps, never failed to speak of it to the British, and Ney, more fierce than all of them, defied Massena's authority. To Ney the dangerous delay at Pombal, the tardiness of Marcognet's brigade, and, finally, the too sudden evacuation of the position at Condeixa, have been attributed; and it is alleged by his censurers that, far from being ordered to set fire to that town on the 13th, as the signal for a preconcerted retreat, he had promised Massena to maintain the position for twenty-four hours longer.\* The per-

\* General Pelet's Notes. See Vol. xxi. *Victoires et Conquêtes des Français*.

sonal risk of the latter, from the hasty change of position, would seem to confirm this; but it is certain that, when Picton was observed passing the Sierra de Anciao by a road before unknown to the French, and by which the second corps could have been separated from the army, and the passes of Miranda de Corvo seized, Ney would have been frantic to have delayed his movement.

At Miranda, the long gathering anger broke out in a violent altercation between the Prince and the Marshal, and at Celerico, Ney, wishing to fall back on Almeida, to shorten the term of the retreat, absolutely refused to concur in the projected march to Coria, and even moved his troops in a contrary direction. Massena, a man not to be opposed with impunity, then deprived him of his command, and gave the sixth corps to Loison. Each Marshal sent confidential officers to Paris to justify their conduct to the Emperor, and from both of those officers I have derived information, but as each thinks that the conduct of his general was approved by Napoleon, their opinions are irreconcilable upon many points; I have, therefore, set down in the narrative the leading sentiments of each, without drawing any other conclusions than those deducible from the acknowledged principles of art and from unquestioned facts. Thus judging, it appears that Massena's general views were as superior to Ney's as the latter's readiness and genius in the handling of troops in action were superior to the Prince's. Yet the Duke of Elchingen often played too near the flame, whereas nothing could be grander than the conceptions of Massena; nor was the project now meditated by him the least important.

From Guarda to Zarza Mayor and Coria was only two days' march longer than to Ciudad Rodrigo, but the army of Portugal must have gone to the latter place a beaten army, seeking for refuge and succor in its fortresses and reserves, and being separated from the central line of invasion; whereas, by gaining Coria, a great movement of war, wiping out the notion of a forced retreat, would have been accomplished. A close and concentric direction would thus have been given to the armies of the south, of the centre, and of Portugal; and then a powerful demonstration against Lisbon would inevitably have brought Lord Wellington back to the Tagus. Thus the conquests of the campaign, namely, Ciudad Rodrigo, Almeida, Badajos, and Olivenza, would have been preserved, and meanwhile the army of the north could have protected Castile and menaced the frontier of Portugal. Massena, having maturely considered this plan, gave orders on the 23d for the execution, but Ney, as we have seen, thwarted him. Meanwhile the English horse and the militia, hovering round Celerico, made in different skirmishes a hundred prisoners and killed as many more,

and the French cavalry posts withdrew from the Pinhel. The sixth corps then took a position at Guarda; the second corps at Belmonte; the eighth corps and the cavalry in the eastern valleys of the Estrella.

Ney's insubordination had rendered null the plan of marching upon the Elga; but Massena expected still to maintain himself at Guarda with the aid of the army of the south, and to hold open the communications with the King and with Soult. His foragers had gathered provisions in the western valleys of the Estrella, and he calculated upon being able to keep his position for eight days with his own force alone. And independent of the general advantage, it was essential to hold Guarda for some time, because Drouet had permitted Julian Sanchez to cut off a large convoy destined for Ciudad Rodrigo, and had left Almeida with only ten days' provisions. Lord Wellington's ready boldness, however, disarranged all the Prince's calculations.

The troops had come up from Moita on the 28th, and with them the reinforcements, which were organized as a seventh division. The light division and the cavalry then passed the Mondego at Celerico, and driving the French out of Frexadas, occupied the villages beyond that place; at the same time, the militia took post on the Pinhel river, cutting the communication with Almeida, while the third division was established at Porca de Misarella, half way up the mountain, to secure the bridges of the higher Mondego. Early on the 29th, the third, sixth, and light divisions, and two regiments of light cavalry, disposed in five columns of attack on a half circle round the foot of the Guarda mountain, ascended by as many paths, all leading upon the town of Guarda, and out-flanking both the right and left of the enemy. They were supported on one wing by the militia, on the other by the fifth division, and in the centre by the first and seventh divisions. A battle was expected, but the absence of Ney was at once felt by both armies. The appearance of the allied columns for the first time threw the French into the greatest confusion, and, without firing a shot, this great and nearly impregnable position was abandoned. Had the pursuit been as vigorous as the attack, it is not easy to see how the second corps could have rejoined Massena. Reynier, however, quitted Belmonte in the night, and recovered his communication with a loss of only three hundred prisoners, although the horse-artillery and cavalry had been launched against him at daylight on the 30th, and much more could have been done, if General Slade had pushed his cavalry forward with the celerity and vigor the occasion required.

On the 1st of April, the allied army descended the mountains,

and reached the Coa; but the French General, still anxious to maintain at once his hold of Portugal and the power of operating either on the side of Coria or of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, was in position on the right bank of that river. The sixth corps was at Rovina, with detachments guarding the bridge of Seceiras and the ford of Atalayon, and the communication with Almeida was maintained by a brigade of the ninth corps, which was posted near the ford of Junça. The second corps was on the hills behind Sabugal, stretching towards Alfayates, and having strong detachments at the bridge of Sabugal and the ford of Rapoulha de Coa. The eighth corps was at Alfayates; and a post was established at Rendo to maintain the communication between the second and sixth corps. In this situation, the French army was disposed on two sides of a triangle, the apex of which was at Sabugal, and both fronts were covered by the Coa, because Sabugal was situated in a sharp bend of the stream. By holding Alfayates, Massena commanded the passes leading through St. Martin Trebeja to Coria; and in the French camp a notion prevailed that the allied divisions were scattered and might be beaten in detail by a sudden attack; the disputes amongst the generals prevented this enterprise, which was founded on false information, from being attempted.

During the first two days of April Lord Wellington occupied a line parallel to the enemy's right, which could not be attacked because the Coa, which is in itself a considerable river, runs along its whole course in a rugged channel, which continually deepens as the stream flows. Trant and Wilson were, however, directed to pass below Almeida, and penetrate between that fortress and Ciudad Rodrigo, thus menacing the enemy's right, flank, and rear, and meanwhile Lord Wellington, leaving the sixth division opposite Ney's corps at Rovina, and a battalion of the seventh corps at the bridge of Seceiras to cover the left flank and rear of the allies, prepared with the remainder of the army to turn and attack the left of the French position. For this purpose, at daylight on the 3d, General Slade's cavalry was directed to cross the upper Coa, where the bed was most practicable, the light division ordered to ford the river a little below, the third division still lower, and the fifth division, with the artillery, to force the bridge of Sabugal; but the first and seventh divisions, with the exception of the battalion at Seceiras, were held in reserve. Thus ten thousand men being pivoted upon the fifth division at Sabugal, were destined to turn Reynier's left, to separate him from the eighth corps, and to surround and crush him before the sixth corps could come from Rovina to his succor. One of those accidents which are frequent in war marred this well-concerted plan.



## COMBAT OF SABUGAL.

The morning was so foggy, that the troops could not gain their respective posts of attack with that simultaneous regularity which is so essential to success, and in the light division no measures were taken by Sir William Erskine to put the columns in a right direction, the brigades were not even held together; he carried off the cavalry without communicating with Colonel Beckwith, and this officer, who commanded the first brigade, being without any instructions, halted at a ford in expectation of further orders. While thus waiting, a staff officer rode up, and somewhat hastily asked, why he did not attack? The thing appeared rash, but with an enemy in his front, he could make no reply, wherefore passing the river, which was deep and rapid, he mounted a very steep wooded hill on the other side. Four companies of the ninety-fifth led up in skirmishing order, followed by the forty-third regiment, and meanwhile the caçadores and the other brigade having passed the river, were moving independently to the right, but upon the true point of direction, and they were now distant. A dark heavy rain rendered it impossible for some time to distinguish friends or foes, and the attack was made too soon, for owing to the obscurity, none of the divisions of the army had yet reached their respective posts. It was made also in a partial, scattered, and dangerous manner, and on the wrong point; for Reynier's whole corps was directly in front, and Beckwith, having only one bayonet regiment and four companies of riflemen, was advancing against more than twelve thousand infantry, supported by cavalry and artillery.

Scarcely had the riflemen reached the top of the hill, when a compact and strong body of French drove them back upon the forty-third, the weather cleared at the instant, and Beckwith at once saw and felt all the danger, but his heart was too big to quail at it. With one fierce charge he beat back the enemy, gained and kept the summit of the hill, although two French howitzers poured showers of grape into his ranks, and a fresh force came against his front while considerable bodies advanced on either flank. Fortunately Reynier, little expecting to be assailed, had, for the convenience of water, placed his main body in the low ground behind the height on which the action commenced. His renewed attack was therefore up hill, yet his musketry, heavy from the beginning, soon increased to a storm, and his men sprang up the acclivity with such violence and clamor, that it was evident nothing but the most desperate fighting could save the British from destruction.

Captain Hopkins, commanding a flank company of the forty-third, running out to the right, with admirable presence of mind seized a



small eminence, close to the French guns and commanding the ascent up which the French troops who had turned the right flank were approaching. His fire was so sharp that the assailants were thrown into confusion; they rallied, but were again disordered by the volleys of this company, and when a third time they endeavored to form a head of attack, Hopkins with a sudden charge increased their disorder, and at the same moment the two battalions of the fifty-second regiment, which had been attracted by the fire, entered the line. Meanwhile the centre and left of the forty-third were furiously engaged, and wonderfully excited; for Beckwith, wounded in the head, and with the blood streaming down his face, rode amongst the foremost of the skirmishers, directing all with ability, and praising the men, in a loud cheerful tone. The musket bullets flew thicker and closer every instant, and the fight became very dangerous; but the French fell fast, and a second charge again cleared the hill. One howitzer was taken by the 43d, and the skirmishers were even descending towards the enemy's ground below, when small bodies of cavalry came galloping in from all parts, and obliged them to take refuge with the main body, which instantly re-formed its line behind a low stone wall. In this state of affairs, a French squadron of dragoons, having surmounted the ascent, rode with incredible daring up to the wall, and were in the act of firing over it with pistols, when a rolling volley laid nearly the whole of them lifeless on the ground. By this time, however, a very strong column of infantry having rushed up the face of the hill, endeavored to break in and retake the howitzer, which was on the edge of the descent and only fifty yards from the wall; but no man could reach it and live, so deadly was the forty-third's fire. Meanwhile two English guns came into action, and the 52d charging violently upon the flank of the enemy's infantry, again vindicated the possession of the height; nevertheless fresh squadrons of cavalry, which had followed the infantry in the last attack, seeing the 52d men scattered by their charge, flew upon them with great briskness, and caused some disorder amongst the foremost skirmishers, but they were soon repulsed.

Reynier, convinced at last that he had acted unskillfully in sending up his troops piecemeal, now put all his reserves, amounting to nearly six thousand infantry with artillery and cavalry, in motion, and outflanking the division on its left, appeared resolute to storm the contested height. But at this critical period, the fifth division passed the bridge of Sabugal, the British cavalry appeared on the hills beyond the enemy's left, and General Colville, with the leading brigade of the third division, issuing out of the woods on Reynier's right, opened a fire on that flank, which instantly decided

the fate of the day. The French General, fearing to be surrounded, then hastily retreated upon Rendo, where the sixth corps, which had been put in march when the first shots were heard, met him, and together they fell back upon Alfayates, pursued by the English cavalry. The loss of the allies in this bloody encounter, which did not last quite an hour, was nearly two hundred killed and wounded: that of the enemy was enormous; three hundred dead bodies were heaped together on the hill, the greatest part round the captured howitzer, and more than twelve hundred were wounded! so unwisely had Reynier handled his masses, and so true and constant was the English fire. The principal causes of this disproportion were, first, the heavy rain, which gave the French only a partial view of the British, and secondly, the thick wood, which, ending near the top of the hill, left only an open and exposed space for the enemy to mount after the first attack; yet it was no exaggeration in Lord Wellington to say, "that this was one of the most glorious actions that British troops were ever engaged in."\*

The next day, the light division took the route of Valdespina, to feel for the enemy on the side of the passes leading upon Coaria. Massena was, however, in full retreat for Ciudad Rodrigo, and on the 5th crossed the frontier of Portugal, when the vigor of the French discipline on sudden occasions was surprisingly manifested. Those men who had for months been living by rapine, whose retreat had been one continued course of violence and devastation, having now passed an imaginary line of frontier, became the most orderly of soldiers; not the slightest rudeness was offered to any Spaniard, and everything demanded was scrupulously paid for, although bread was sold at two shillings a pound! Massena himself also, fierce and terrible as he was in Portugal, always treated the Spaniards with gentleness and moderation.

While these events were passing at Sabugal, Trant, after passing the lower Coa with four thousand militia, had taken post two miles from Almeida. But the river suddenly flooded behind him, all the bridges had been broken by Massena, and near fort Concepcion there was a brigade of the ninth corps, which had been employed to cover the march of the battering train from Almeida to Ciudad Rodrigo. In this dangerous situation, Trant constructed a temporary bridge with great difficulty, and was going to retire on the 6th, when he received a letter from the British head-quarters, desiring him to be vigilant in cutting the communication with Almeida, and fearless, because the next morning a British force would be up to his assistance. Marching then to Val de Mula, he boldly interposed between the fortress and the brigade of the ninth corps;

\* Official Despatch.

but the promised succors did not appear, and the still advancing French were within half a mile of his position! His destruction appeared inevitable, when suddenly two cannon shots were heard to the southward, the enemy's troops formed squares in retreat, and in a few moments six squadrons of British cavalry and Captain Bull's troop of horse artillery came sweeping up the plain in their rear. Military order and coolness marked the French retreat across the Turones, yet the cannon shots ploughed with a fearful effect through their dense masses, and the horsemen continually flanked their line of march; they however gained the rough ground, and finally escaped over the Agueda by Barba del Puerco, but with the loss of three hundred men killed, wounded, and prisoners. Trant was thus saved as it were by a miracle; for some unexpected accident having prevented the English infantry from marching in the morning, according to Lord Wellington's promise, he had pushed on this cavalry, which would have been useless an hour later.

The Prince of Esling had reached Ciudad Rodrigo two days before this event, and Lord Wellington now stood victorious on the confines of Portugal, having executed what to others appeared incredibly rash and vain even to attempt.

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## CHAPTER V.

Estimate of the French loss—Anecdote of Colonel Waters—Lord Wellington's great conceptions explained—How impeded—Affairs in the south of Spain—Formation of the fourth and fifth Spanish armies—Siege of Campo Mayor—Place falls—Excellent conduct of Major Tallia—Beresford surprises Montbrun—Combat of cavalry—Campo Mayor recovered—Beresford takes cantonments round Elvas—His difficulties—Reflections upon his proceedings—He throws a bridge near Jerumenha and passes the Guadiana—Outpost of cavalry cut off by the French—Castaños arrives at Elvas—Arrangements relative to the chief command—Beresford advances against Latour Maubourg, who returns to Llerena—General Cole takes Olivenza—Cavalry skirmish near Usagre—Lord Wellington arrives at Elvas, examines Badajoz—Skirmish there—Arranges the operations—Political difficulties—Lord Wellington returns to the Agueda—Operations in the north—Skirmishes on the Agueda—Massena advances to Ciudad Rodrigo—Lord Wellington reaches the army—Retires behind the Dos Casas—Combat of Fuentes Onoro—Battle of Fuentes Onoro—Evacuation of Almeida.

MASSENA entered Portugal with sixty-five thousand men, his reinforcements while at Santarem were about ten thousand, and he repassed the frontier with forty-five thousand; hence the invasion of Portugal cost him about thirty thousand men, of which fourteen

thousand might have fallen by the sword or been taken. Not more than six thousand were lost during the retreat; but had Lord Wellington, unrestrained by political considerations, attacked him vigorously at Redinha, Condeixa, Casal Nova, and Miranda de Corvo, half the French army would have been lost. It is unquestionable that a retreating army should fight as little as possible.

When the French reached the Agueda, their cavalry detachments, heavy artillery, and convalescents, again augmented the army to more than fifty thousand men, but the fatigues of the retreat and the want of provisions would not suffer them to show a front to the allies; wherefore, drawing two hundred thousand raticus from Ciudad, they fell back to Salamanca, and Lord Wellington invested Almeida. The light division occupied Gallegos and Espeja, the rest of the army were disposed in villages on both sides of the Coa, and the head-quarters were transferred to Villa Formosa. Here, Colonel Waters, who had been taken near Belmonte during the retreat, rejoined the army. Confident in his own resources, he had refused his parole, and, when carried to Ciudad Rodrigo, rashly mentioned his intention of escaping to the Spaniard in whose house he was lodged. This man betrayed him, but a servant, detesting his master's treachery, secretly offered his aid. Waters only desired him to get the rowels of his spurs sharpened, and when the French army was near Salamanca, he being in the custody of *gens d'armes*, waited until their chief, who rode the only good horse in the party, had alighted, then giving the spur to his own beast, galloped off! an act of incredible resolution and hardihood, for he was on a large plain, and before him, and for miles behind him, the road was covered with the French columns. His hat fell off, and thus distinguished, he rode along the flank of the troops, some encouraging him, others firing at him, and the *gens d'armes*, sword in hand, close at his heels; nevertheless, he broke at full speed between two columns, gained a wooded hollow, and, having baffled his pursuers, evaded the rear of the enemy's army. The third day he reached head-quarters, where Lord Wellington had caused his baggage to be brought, observing that he would not be long absent!

Massena, having occupied Salamanca, and communicated with Bessières, sent a convoy to Ciudad Rodrigo, and Lord Wellington was unable to prevent its entrance.\* He had sent the militia to their homes, disposed his army between the Coa and the Agueda, and blockaded Almeida; he also caused two temporary bridges to be laid (where the road from Cinco Villas to Pinhel crosses the Coa) to secure a retreat for the troops on that side, if pressed, which might easily happen; for the Portuguese army was in a

\* Appendix 21, Vol. II.