

loathsome dungeons, without any cause of complaint; and, in the affair of Mascarheñas, their conduct was distinguished alike by wanton cruelty and useless treachery. This youth, when only fifteen, had with many others entered the French service in Junot's time, under the permission of his own prince; and he and the Conde de Sabugal were taken by the peasantry in 1810, endeavoring to pass from Massena's army into Spain, Sabugal in uniform, Mascarheñas in disguise. They were both tried as traitors. The first, a general officer, and with powerful friends amongst the Fidalgos, was acquitted, as indeed was only just; but he was then appointed to a situation under the Regency, which was disgraceful, as arising from faction: Mascarheñas was a boy, and had no powerful friends, and he was condemned to death. Lord Wellington and Mr. Stuart represented the injustice of this sentence, and they desired that if humanity was unheeded, the government would put him to death as a spy, for being in disguise, and so prevent the danger of reprisals, already threatened by Massena. The young man's mother and sisters, grovelling in the dust, implored the Regency to spare him; but to show their hatred of Lord Wellington and Mr. Stuart, for the disputes with the Regency were then highest, the government told the miserable women, that it was the British general and minister who demanded his death, and they were sent with this brutal falsehood to weep and to ask grace from persons who had no power to grant it. Mascarheñas was publicly executed as a traitor, for entering the French service under the authority of his native prince, while Sabugal was acquitted, and even rewarded, although precisely in the same circumstances, when the excuse of the disguise had been rejected.

In 1810 one Corea, calling himself an aid-de-camp of Massena, was likewise seized in disguise within the British lines, and, having given useful information, was by Lord Wellington confined in St. Julians, to protect him from the Portuguese government. After a time he became deranged, and was released, whereupon the Regency, rather than keep him, desired that he might be sent as a prisoner of war to England; thus, for convenience, admitting the very principle which they had rejected when only honor and humanity were concerned. A process against the Marquis d'Alorna had also been commenced, but his family being powerful, it was soon dropped, and yet the government refused Madame d'Alorna leave to join her husband, thus showing themselves spiteful and contemptible as well as cowardly and bloody. Even the court of Brazil was shocked. The Prince rebuked the Regency severely for the death of Mascarheñas, reversed the sentences on some others, and banished Sabugal to Terceira.

This was the political state of Portugal.

Lord Liverpool's intimation, that neither corn nor specie could be had from England, threw Lord Wellington on his own resources for feeding his troops. He had before created a paper money by means of commissariat bills, which, being paid regularly at certain periods, passed current with the people when the national bonds called "Apolocies" were at an enormous discount. He now, in concert with Mr. Stuart, entered into commerce to supply his necessities. For having ascertained that grain in different parts of the world, especially in South America, could be bought by bills, cheaper than it sold for hard cash in Lisbon; and that in Egypt, although only to be bought with specie, it was at a reduced price; they employed mercantile agents to purchase it for the army account, and after filling the magazines sold the overplus to the inhabitants. This transaction was, however, greatly impeded by the disputes with North America, which were now rapidly hastening to a rupture; the American ships which frequented the Tagus being prevented, by the non-importation act, from bringing back merchandise, were forced to demand coin, which helped to drain the country of specie.

As Mr. Stuart could obtain no assistance from the English merchants of Lisbon, to aid him in a traffic which interfered with their profits, he wrote circular letters to the consuls in the Mediterranean, and in the Portuguese islands, and to the English minister at Washington, desiring them to negotiate treasury bills, to increase the shipments of corn to Lisbon, and pay with new bills, to be invested in such articles of British manufacture as the non-importation law still permitted to go to America. By this complicated process he contrived to keep something in the military chest; and this commerce, which Lord Wellington truly observed was not what ought to have occupied his time and attention, saved the army and the people, when the proceedings of Mr. Perceval would have destroyed both. Yet it was afterwards cavilled at and censured by the ministers, on the representations of the merchants, who found their exorbitant gains interrupted by it.

Pressed by such accumulated difficulties, and not supported in England as he deserved, the General, who had more than once intimated his resolution to withdraw from the Peninsula, now seriously thought of executing it. Yet when he considered that the cause was one even of more interest to England than to the Peninsula; that the embarrassments of the French might be even greater than his own, and that Napoleon himself, gigantic as his exertions had been, and were likely to be, was scarcely aware of the difficulty of conquering the Peninsula while an English army held Portugal;

when he considered also, that light was breaking in the north of Europe, that the chances of war are many, even in the worst of times, and above all, when his mental eye caught the beams of his own coming glory, he quelled his rising indignation, and retempered his mighty energies to bear the buffet of the tempest.

But he could not remove the obstacles that choked his path, nor could he stand still, lest the ground should open beneath his feet. If he moved in the north, Marmont's army and the army under Bessières were ready to oppose him, and he must take Ciudad Rodrigo or blockade it before he could even advance against them. To take that place required a battering-train, to be brought up through a mountainous country from Lamego, and there was no covering position for the army during the siege. To blockade and pass it, would so weaken his forces, already inferior to the enemy, that he could do nothing effectual; meanwhile Soult would have again advanced from Llerena, and perhaps have added Elvas to his former conquests.

To act on the defensive in Beira, and follow up the blow against Soult, by invading Andalusia, in concert with the Murcians and the corps of Blake, Beguines, and Graham, while Joseph's absence paralyzed the army of the centre, while the army of Portugal was being reorganized in Castile, and while Suchet was still engaged with Tarragona, would have been an operation suitable to Lord Wellington's fame and to the circumstances of the moment. But then Badajos must have been blockaded with a corps powerful enough to have defied the army of the centre, and the conduct of the Portuguese government had so reduced the allied forces, that this would not have left a sufficient army to encounter Soult. Hence, after the battle of Albuera, the only thing to be done was to renew the siege of Badajos, which, besides its local interest, contained the enemy's bridge, equipage and battering train; but which, on common military calculations, could scarcely be expected to fall before Soult and Marmont would succor it: yet it was only by the taking of that town that Portugal itself could be secured beyond the precincts of Lisbon, and a base for further operations obtained.

According to the regular rules of art, Soult should have been driven over the mountains before the siege was begun, but there was no time to do this, and Marmont was equally to be dreaded on the other side; wherefore Lord Wellington could only try, as it were, to snatch away the fortress from between them, and he who, knowing his real situation, censures him for the attempt, is neither a general nor a statesman. The question was, whether the attempt should be made or the contest in the Peninsula be resigned. It failed, indeed, and the Peninsula was not lost, but no argument can

be thence derived, because it was the attempt, rather than the success, which was necessary to keep the war alive; moreover the French did not push their advantages as far as they might have done, and the unforeseen circumstance of a large sum of money being brought to Lisbon, by private speculation, at the moment of failure, enabled the English General to support the crisis.

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## CHAPTER V.

Second English siege of Badajos—Means of the allies very scanty—Place invested—San Christoval assaulted—The allies repulsed—Second assault fails likewise—The siege turned into a blockade—Observations.

### SECOND ENGLISH SIEGE OF BADAJOS.

THERE is no operation in war so certain as a modern siege, provided the rules of art are strictly followed, but, unlike the ancient sieges in that particular, it is also different in this—that no operation is less open to irregular daring, because the course of the engineer can neither be hurried nor delayed without danger. Lord Wellington knew that a siege of Badajos, in form, required longer time and better means than were at his disposal; but he was forced to incur danger and loss of reputation, which is loss of strength, or to adopt some compendious mode of taking that place. The time that he could demand, and time is in all sieges the greatest point, was precisely that which the French required to bring up a force sufficient to disturb the operation; and this depended on the movements of the Army of Portugal, whose march from Salamanca to Badajos, by the pass of Baños, or even through that of Gata, could not be stopped by General Spencer, because the mouths of those defiles were commanded by Marmont's positions. It was possible also at that season for an army to pass the Tagus by fords near Alcantara, and hence more than twenty days of free action against the place were not to be calculated upon.

Now the carriages of the battering guns used in Beresford's siege were so much damaged, that the artillery officers asked eleven days to repair them; and the scanty means of transport for stores was much diminished by carrying the wounded from Albuera to the different hospitals. Thus more than fifteen days of open trenches and nine days of fire could not be expected. With good guns, plentiful stores, and a corps of regular sappers and miners, this time would probably have sufficed; but none of these things were in the

camp, and it was a keen jest of Picton to say that "Lord Wellington sued Badajos in formâ pauperis."

The guns, some of them cast in Philip the Second's reign, were of soft brass, and false in their bore; the shot were of different sizes, and the largest too small; the Portuguese gunners were inexperienced, there were but few British artillery-men, few engineers, no sappers or miners, and no time to teach the troops of the line how to make fascines and gabions. Regular and sure approaches against the body of the place, by the Pardaleras and the Picurina outworks, could not be attempted; but it was judged that Beresford's lines of attack on the castle and Fort Christoval might be successfully renewed, avoiding the errors of that general; that is to say, by pushing the double attacks simultaneously, and with more powerful means. San Christoval might thus be taken, and batteries from thence could sweep the interior of the castle, which was meanwhile to be breached. Something also was hoped from the inhabitants, and something from the effect of Soult's retreat after Albuera.

This determination once taken, everything was put in motion with the greatest energy. Major Dickson, an artillery officer whose talents were very conspicuous during the whole war, had, with unexpected rapidity, prepared a battering train of thirty twenty-four pounders, four sixteen pounders, and twelve eight and ten-inch howitzers made to serve as mortars by taking off the wheels and placing them on trucks. Six iron Portuguese ship-guns were forwarded from Salvatierra, making all together fifty-two pieces. A considerable convoy of engineer's stores had already arrived from Alcaccer do Sal, and a company of British artillery marched from Lisbon to be mixed with the Portuguese, making a total of six hundred gunners. The regular engineer officers present were only twenty-one in number; but eleven volunteers from the line were joined as assistant engineers, and a draft of three hundred intelligent men from the line, including twenty-five artificers of the staff corps, strengthened the force immediately under their command.

Hamilton's Portuguese division was already before the town, and on the 24th of May, at the close of evening, General Houston's division, increased to five thousand men, by the addition of the seventeenth Portuguese regiment, and the Tavira and Lagos militia, invested San Christoval. The flying bridge was then laid down on the Guadiana, and on the 27th Picton's division, arriving from Campo Mayor, crossed the river by the ford above the town, and joined Hamilton, their united force being about ten thousand men. General Hill commanded the covering army, which, including the Spaniards, was spread from Merida to Albuera. The cavalry was pushed forward in observation of Soult, and a few days

after, intelligence having arrived that Drouet's division was on the point of effecting a junction with that marshal, two regiments of cavalry and two brigades of infantry, which had been quartered at Coria, as posts of communication with Spencer, were called up to reinforce the covering army.

While the allies were engaged at Albuera, Phillipon, the governor of Badajos, had levelled their trenches, repaired his own damages, and obtained a small supply of wine and vegetables from the people of Estremadura, who were still awed by the presence of Soult's army; and within the place all was quiet, for the citizens did not now exceed five thousand souls. He had also mounted more guns, and when the place was invested, parties of the townsmen mixed with soldiers were observed working to improve the defences; wherefore, as any retrenchments made in the castle, behind the intended points of attack, would have frustrated the besiegers' object by prolonging the siege, Lord Wellington had a large telescope placed in the tower of La Lippe, near Elvas, by which the interior of the castle could be plainly looked into, and all preparations discovered.

In the night of the 29th, ground was broken for a false attack against the Pardaleras, and the following night sixteen hundred workmen, with a covering party of twelve hundred, sank a parallel against the castle, on an extent of eleven hundred yards, without being discovered by the enemy, who did not fire until after daylight. The same night twelve hundred workmen, covered by eight hundred men under arms, opened a parallel four hundred and fifty yards from San Christoval, and seven hundred yards from the bridge-head. On this line one breaching and two counter batteries were raised against the fort and against the bridge-head, to prevent a sally from that point; and a fourth battery was also commenced, to search the defences of the castle, but the workmen were discovered, and a heavy fire struck down many of them.

On the 31st, the attack against the castle, the soil being very soft, was pushed forward without much interruption, and rapidly; but the Christoval attack being carried on in a rocky soil, and the earth brought up from the rear, proceeded slowly, and with considerable loss. This day the British artillery company came up on mules from Estremos, and the engineer hastened the works. The direction of the parallel against the castle was such, that the right gradually approached the point of attack by which the heaviest fire of the place was avoided; yet so great was the desire to save time, that before the suitable point of distance was attained, a battery of fourteen twenty-four pounders, with six large howitzers, was marked out.

On the Christoval side, the batteries were not finished before the night of the 1st of June, for the soil was so rocky, that the miner was employed to level the ground for the platforms; and the garrison, having mortars of sixteen and eighteen inches diameter mounted on the castle, sent every shell amongst the workmen. These huge missiles would have ruined the batteries on that side altogether, if the latter had not been on the edge of a ridge, from whence most of the shells rolled off before bursting; yet so difficult is it to judge rightly in war, that Phillipon stopped this fire, thinking it was thrown away!\* The progress of the works was also delayed by the bringing of earth from a distance, and woolpacks, purchased at Elvas, were found to be an excellent substitute.

In the night of the 2d, the batteries on both sides were completed, and armed with forty-three pieces of different sizes, of which twenty were pointed against the castle; the next day the fire of the besiegers opened, but the windage caused by the smallness of the shot rendered it very ineffectual at first, and five pieces became unserviceable. However, before evening the practice was steadier, the fire of the fort was nearly silenced, and the covering of masonry fell from the castle wall, discovering a perpendicular bank of clay.

In the night of the 3d, the parallel against the castle was prolonged, and a fresh battery for seven guns traced out at six hundred and fifty yards from the breach. On the 4th, the garrison's fire was increased by several additional guns, and six more pieces of the besiegers were disabled, principally by their own fire. Meanwhile the batteries told but slightly against the bank of clay.

At Christoval, the fort was much injured, and some damage was done to the castle, from one of the batteries on that side; but the guns were so soft and bad that the rate of firing was of necessity greatly reduced in all the batteries. In the night the new battery was armed, all the damaged works were repaired, and the next day the enemy having brought a gun in Christoval to plunge into the trenches on the castle side, the parallel there was deepened and traverses were constructed to protect the troops.

Fifteen pieces still played against the castle, but the bank of clay, although falling away in flakes, always remained perpendicular. One damaged gun was repaired on the Christoval side, but two more had become unserviceable.

In the night the parallel against the castle was again extended, a fresh battery was traced out, at only five hundred and twenty yards from the breach, to receive the Portuguese iron guns, which had arrived at Elvas; and on the Christoval side some new batteries were opened, and some old ones were abandoned. During

\* French Register of the Siege, MS.

this night the garrison began to intrench themselves behind the castle breach; before morning their laborers were well covered, and two additional pieces from Christoval were made to plunge into the trenches with great effect. On the other hand, the fire of the besiegers had broken the clay bank, which took such a slope as to appear nearly practicable, and the stray shells and shot set fire to the houses nearest the castle; but three more guns were disabled.

On the 6th there were two breaches in Christoval; and the principal one being found practicable, a company of grenadiers, with twelve ladders, were directed to assault it, while a second company turned the fort by the east to divert the enemy's attention. Three hundred men from the trenches were at the same time pushed forward by the west side, to cut the communication between the fort and the bridge-head; and a detachment with a six-pounder moved into the valley of the Gebora, to prevent any passage of the Guadiana by boats.

#### FIRST ASSAULT OF CHRISTOVAL.

The storming party, commanded by Major M'Intosh, of the 85th regiment, was preceded by a forlorn hope under Mr. Dyas, of the 51st; and this gallant gentleman, guided by the engineer Forster, a young man of uncommon bravery, reached the glacis about midnight, and descended the ditch without being discovered. The French had, however, cleared all the rubbish away; the breach had still seven feet of perpendicular wall, many obstacles, such as carts chained together and pointed beams of wood, were placed above it, and large shells were ranged along the ramparts to roll down upon the assailants. The forlorn hope finding the opening impracticable, was retiring with little loss, when the main body, which had been exposed to a flank fire from the town, as well as a direct fire from the fort, came leaping into the ditch with ladders, and another effort was made to escalade at different points; the ladders were too short, and the garrison, consisting of only seventy-five men, besides the cannoneers, made so stout a resistance, and the confusion and mischief occasioned by the bursting of the shells was so great, that the assailants again retired, with the loss of more than one hundred men.

Bad success always produces disputes, and the causes of this failure were attributed by some to the breach being impracticable from the first; by others, to the confusion which arose after the main body had entered. French writers affirm that the breach was certainly practicable on the night of the 5th, but repaired on the 6th; that as the besiegers did not attack until midnight, the workmen had time to clear the ruins away and to raise fresh ob-



stacles; and the bravery of the soldiers, who were provided with three muskets each, did the rest.\* But it is also evident, that, whether from inexperience, accident, or other causes, the combinations for the assault were not very well calculated; the storming party was too weak, the ladders few and short, and the breach not sufficiently scoured by the fire of the batteries. The attack itself was also irregular and ill-combined, for the leading troops were certainly repulsed before the main body had descended the ditch. The intrepidity of the assailants was admitted by all sides; yet it is a great point in such attacks that the supports should form almost one body with the leaders, because the sense of power derived from numbers is a strong incentive to valor, and obstacles which would be insurmountable to a few, seem to vanish before a multitude. It is also to be recollected that this was a case where not loss of men, but time, was to be considered.

During this night the iron guns were placed in battery against the castle, but two more of the brass pieces became unserviceable, and the following day three others were disabled. However, the bank of clay at the castle at last offered a practicable slope, and during the night Captain Patton, of the engineers, examined it closely; he was wounded mortally in returning, yet lived to make his report that it was practicable. Nevertheless, the garrison continued as they had done every night, at both breaches, to clear away the ruins, and with bales of wool and other materials to form defences behind the opening. They ranged also a number of huge shells and barrels of powder, with matches fastened to them, along the ramparts, and placed chosen men to defend the breach, each man being supplied with four muskets.

In this order they fearlessly awaited another attack, which was soon made. For intelligence now arrived that Drouet's corps was close to Llerena, and that Marmont was on the move from Salamanca, and hence Lord Wellington, seeing that his prey was likely to escape, as a last effort resolved to assault Christoval again. But this time four hundred British, Portuguese, and Frenchmen of the chasseurs Britanniques, carrying sixteen long ladders, were destined for the attack; the supports were better closed up; the appointed hour was nine instead of twelve, and a greater number of detachments than before were distributed to the right and left, to distract the enemy's attention, to cut off his communication with the town, and to be ready to improve any success which might be obtained. On the other side, Phillipon increased the garrison of the fort to two hundred men.

\* Lamarre's Sieges.

## SECOND ASSAULT OF CHRISTOVAL.

The storming party was commanded by Major M'Geechy; the forlorn hope, again led by the gallant Dyas, was accompanied by Mr. Hunt, an engineer officer; and, a little after nine o'clock, the leading troops bounding forward, were immediately followed by the support, amidst a shattering fire of musketry, which killed Major M'Geechy, Mr. Hunt, and many men upon the glacis. The troops with loud shouts jumped into the ditch, but the French scoffingly called to them to come on, and at the same time rolled the barrels of powder and shells down, while the musketry made fearful and rapid havoc. In a little time the two leading columns united at the main breach, the supports also came up, confusion arose about the ladders, of which only a few could be reared, and the enemy, standing on the ramparts, bayoneted the foremost of the assailants, overturned the ladders, and again poured their destructive fire upon the crowd below. When a hundred and forty men had fallen, the order to retire was given.

An assault on the castle breach might still have been tried, but the troops could not have formed between the top and the retrenchments behind the breach until Christoval was taken, and the guns from thence used to clear the interior of the castle; hence the siege was of necessity raised, because to take Christoval required several days more, and Soult was now ready to advance. The stores were removed on the 10th, and the attack was turned into a blockade.

## OBSERVATIONS.

1. The allies lost, during this unfortunate siege, nearly four hundred men and officers, and the whole of their proceedings were against rules. The working parties were too weak, the guns and stores too few, and the points of attack chosen, not the best; the defences were untouched by counter-batteries, and the breaching batteries were at too great a distance for the bad guns employed; howitzers, mounted on trucks, were but a poor substitute for mortars, and the sap was not practised; lastly, the assaults were made before the glacis had been crowned and a musketry fire established against the breach.

That a siege so conducted should fail against such a brave and intelligent garrison, is not strange; but it is most strange and culpable, that a government, which had been so long engaged in war as the British, should have left the engineer department, with respect to organization and equipment, in such a state as to make it, in despite of the officers' experience, bravery, and zeal, a very inefficient arm of war. The skill displayed belonged to particular

persons, rather than to the corps at large; and the very tools with which they worked, especially those sent from the store-keeper's department, were so shamefully bad that the work required could scarcely be performed: the captured French cutting tools were eagerly sought for by the engineers as being infinitely better than the British; when the soldiers' lives and the honor of England's arms were at stake, the English cutlery was found worse than the French.

2. The neglect of rules, above noticed, was for the most part a matter of absolute necessity; yet censure might attach to the general, inasmuch as he could have previously sent to England for a battering train. But then the conduct of the Portuguese and British governments when Lord Wellington was in the lines, left him so little hope of besieging any place on the frontier, that he was hourly in fear of being obliged to embark: moreover the badness of the Portuguese guns was not known, and the space of time that elapsed between the fall of Badajos and this siege was insufficient to procure artillery from England; neither would the Portuguese have furnished the means of carriage. It may however at all times be taken as a maxim, that the difficulties of war are so innumerable that no head was ever yet strong enough to fore-calculate them all.

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## CHAPTER VI.

General Spencer's operations in Beira—Pack blows up Almeida—Marmont marches by the passes to the Tagus, and Spencer to the Alemtejo—Soulé and Marmont advance to succor Badajos—The siege is raised, and the allies pass the Guadiana—Lord Wellington's position on the Caya described—Skirmish of cavalry in which the British are defeated—Critical period of the war—French marshals censured for not giving battle—Lord Wellington's firmness—Inactivity of the Spaniards—Blake moves to the Condado de Niebla—He attacks the castle of Niebla—The French armies retire from Badajos, and Soult marches to Andalusia—Succors the castle of Niebla—Blake flies to Ayamonte—Sails for Cadiz, leaving Ballesteros in the Condado—French move against him—He embarks his infantry and sends his cavalry through Portugal to Estremadura—Blake lands at Almeria and joins the Murcian army—Goes to Valencia, and during his absence Soult attacks his army—Rout of Baza—Soult returns to Andalusia—His actions eulogized.

It will be remembered that Soult, instead of retiring into Andalusia, took a flank position at Llerena, and awaited the arrival of Drouet's division, which had been detached from Massena's army. At Llerena, although closely watched by General Hill, the French Marshal, with an army oppressed by its losses and rendered unruly

by want, maintained an attitude of offence until assured of Drouet's approach, when he again advanced to Los Santos, near which place a slight cavalry skirmish took place to the disadvantage of the French.

On the 14th, Drouet, whose march had been very rapid, arrived, and then Soult, who knew that Lord Wellington expected large reinforcements, and was desirous to forestall them, advanced to Fuente del Maestro, whereupon Hill took measures to concentrate the covering army on the position of Albuera.\* Meanwhile Marmont, who had reorganized the army of Portugal, in six divisions of infantry and five brigades of cavalry, received Napoleon's orders to co-operate with Soult; and in this view had sent Reynier with two divisions by the pass of Baños, while himself with a considerable force of infantry and cavalry and ten guns escorted a convoy to Ciudad Rodrigo. General Spencer, with the first, fifth, sixth, and light divisions, and one brigade of cavalry, was then behind the Agueda; and Pack's Portuguese brigade was above Almeida, which had been again placed in a condition to resist an irregular assault. Spencer's orders were to make his marches correspond with those of the enemy, if the latter should point towards the Tagus; but if the French attacked, he was to take the line of the Coa, and to blow up Almeida if the movements went to isolate that fortress. On the morning of the 6th, Marmont, having introduced his convoy, marched out of Rodrigo in two columns, one moving upon Gallegos, the other upon Espeja. The light division fell back before the latter, and Slade's cavalry before the former; but in this retrograde movement, the latter gave its flank obliquely to the line of the enemy's advance, which soon closed upon and cannonaded it, with eight pieces of artillery. Unfortunately the British rear-guard got jammed in between the French and a piece of marshy ground, and in this situation the whole must have been destroyed, if Captain Purvis, with a squadron of the fourth dragoons, had not charged the enemy while the other troopers, with strong horses and a knowledge of the firmest parts, got through the marsh. Purvis then passed also, and the French horses could not follow. Thus the retreat was effected with the loss of only twenty men. After the action an officer calling himself Montbrun's aid-de-camp deserted to the allies.

General Spencer, more distinguished for great personal intrepidity than for quickness of military conception, was now undecided as to his measures; and the army was by no means in a safe situation, for the country was covered with baggage, the movements of the divisions were wide and without concert, and General Pack,

\* Intercepted despatch from Soult to Marmont.

who had the charge of Almeida, too hastily blew it up. In this uncertainty the Adjutant General Pakenham pointed out that the French did not advance as if to give battle, that their numbers were evidently small, their movements more ostentatious than vigorous, and probably intended to cover a flank movement by the passes leading to the Tagus; he therefore urged Spencer either to take up a position of battle which would make the enemy discover his real numbers and intentions, or retire at once behind the Coa, with a view to march to Lord Wellington's assistance. These arguments were supported by Colonel Waters, who having closely watched the infantry coming out of Ciudad Rodrigo, observed that they were too clean and well dressed to have come off a long march, and must therefore be a part of the garrison. He had also ascertained that a large body was actually in movement towards the passes.

Spencer yielding to these representations marched in the evening by Alfayates to Soito, and the next day behind the Coa. Here certain intelligence that Marmont was in the passes reached him, and he continued his march to the Alemtejo by Penamacor, but detached one division and his cavalry to Coria, as flankers, while he passed with the main body by Castello Branco, Villa Velha, Niza, and Portalegre. The season was burning and the marches long, yet so hardened by constant service were the light division, and so well organized by General Craufurd, that, although covering from eighteen to eight-and-twenty miles daily, they did not leave a single straggler behind. The flanking troops, who had been rather unnecessarily exposed at Coria, then followed, and Marmont, having imposed upon Spencer and Pack by his demonstration in front of Ciudad Rodrigo, filed off by the pass of Perales, while Reynier moved by the passes of Bejar and Baños, and the whole were by forced marches soon united at the bridge of Almaraz. Here a pontoon bridge expected from Madrid had not arrived, and the passage of the Tagus was made with only one ferry boat, which caused a delay of four days, which would have proved fatal to Badajos if the battering guns employed in that siege had been really effective.

When the river was crossed, the French army marched in two columns with the greatest rapidity upon Merida and Medellin, where they arrived the 18th, and opened their communications with Soult.

On the other side, Lord Wellington had been attentively watching these movements; he had never intended to press Badajos beyond the 10th, because he knew that when reinforced with Drouet's division, Soult alone would be strong enough to raise the siege, and

hence the hurried assaults; but he was resolved to fight Soult, and although he raised the siege on the 10th, yet, informed by an intercepted letter that Phillipon's provisions would be exhausted on the 20th, he continued the blockade of the place, in hopes that some such accident of war as the delay at Almaraz might impede Marmont. It may be here asked, why, as he knew a few days would suffice to reduce Badajos, he did not retrench his whole army and persist in the siege? The answer is, that Elvas being out of repair and exhausted both of provisions and ammunition by the siege of Badajos, the enemy would immediately have taken that fortress.

When Soult's advanced guard had reached Los Santos, the covering army, consisting of the second and fourth divisions and Blake's Spaniards, was concentrated at Albuera; Hamilton's Portuguese were also directed there from Badajos; meanwhile the third and seventh divisions maintained the blockade, and Wellington expecting a battle repaired in person to Albuera, but, unlike Beresford, he had that position intrenched, and did not forget to occupy the hill on the right.

On the 14th, it was known that Marmont was at Truxillo, and that in four days he could unite with Soult, wherefore the blockade was also raised with a view to repossess the Guadiana; yet Wellington still lingered at Albuera, hoping to fall on Soult separately, but the cautious manner in which the latter moved, continually refusing his left and edging with his right towards Almendralejos, soon extinguished this chance. On the 17th, the blockade having been raised the day before, the allies repossessed the Guadiana in two columns. The British and Portuguese moved by the pontoon bridge near Badajos, the Spaniards crossed at Jerumenha;—this movement, not an easy one, was executed without loss of men or stores, and without accident, save that General William Stewart, by some error, took the same line as Blake, and at night fell in with the Spaniards, who thought his division French and were like to have fired.

The 19th, the united French armies entered Badajos, which was thus succored after two most honorable defences, and at a moment when Phillipon, despairing of aid and without provisions, was preparing his means of breaking out and escaping.

The 21st, Godinot's division which had marched by Valverde took possession of Olivenza; the 22d, he pushed a detachment under the guns of Jerumenha, and the same day the whole of the French cavalry crossed the Guadiana in two columns, advancing towards Villa Viciosa and Elvas on one side, and Campo Mayor on the other.

Lord Wellington, being now joined by the head of Spencer's corps, had placed his army on both sides of the Caya, with cavalry

posts towards the mouth of that river and on the Guadiana in front of Elvas. His right wing was extended behind the Caya to the lower bridge on that river, and his left wing had a field of battle on some high ground resting on the Gebora, a little beyond Campo Mayor, which fortress was occupied, and the open space between it and the high ground strongly intrenched. On this side also cavalry were posted in observation beyond the Gebora and about Albuquerque, the whole position forming an irregular arch embracing the bridge of Badajos. The wood and town of Aronches were behind the centre of the position, and the little fortified place of Ouguella was behind the left; but the right wing was much more numerous than the left, and the Monte Reguingo, a wooded ridge between Campo Mayor and the Caya, was occupied by the light division, whose position could not be recognized by the enemy.

If the French attacked the left of the allies, a short movement would have sufficed to bring the bulk of the troops into action on the menaced point, because the whole extent of country occupied did not exceed ten or twelve miles: the communications also were good, and from Campo Mayor open plains, reaching to Badajos, exposed the French movements, which could be distinguished both from Elvas, from Campo Mayor, and from the many atalayas or watch-towers on that frontier.

The chief merit of this position was the difficulty of recognizing it from the enemy's side, and to protect the rear, the first division was retained at Portalegre: from thence it could intercept the enemy at Marvao or Castello de Vide if he should attempt to turn the allies by Albuquerque, and was ready to oppose Soult if he should move between Elvas and Estremos; but the march from Portalegre was too long to hope for the assistance of this division in a battle near Elvas or Campo Mayor.

The French cavalry, as I have said, passed the Guadiana on the 21st, both by the bridge of Badajos and by two fords, where the road of Olivenza crosses that river, below the confluence of the Caya. The right column, after driving back the outposts of the allies, was opposed by the heavy dragoons, and by Madden's Portuguese, and retired without seeing the position on the Campo Mayor side; but the horsemen of the left column, while patrolling towards Villa Viciosa and Elvas, cut off a squadron of the eleventh dragoons, and the second German hussars which were on the Guadiana escaped to Elvas with difficulty and loss. The cause of this misfortune, in which nearly a hundred and fifty men were killed or taken, is not very clear, for the French aver that Colonel Lallemand by a feigned retreat drew the cavalry into an ambuscade, and the rumors in the English camp were various and discordant.

After this action the French troops were quartered along the Guadiana and above and below Badajos from Xeres de los Cavalheiros to Montijo, and proceeded to collect provisions for themselves and for the fortress; hence, with the exception of a vain attempt on the 26th to cut off the cavalry detachments on the side of Albuquerque, no farther operations took place.

All things had seemed to tend to a great and decisive battle, and, although the crisis glided away without any event of importance, this was one of the most critical periods of the war. For Marmont brought down, including a detachment of the army of the centre, thirty-one thousand infantry, four thousand five hundred cavalry, and fifty-four guns; Soult about twenty-five thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry, and thirty-six guns;—to effect this, Andalusia and Castile had been nearly stripped of troops.\* Bessières had abandoned the Asturias, united with General Mayer, who had succeeded Serras in Leon, and was scarcely able, as we have seen, to keep the Gallicians in check on the Orbijo; the chief armies of the Peninsula were in presence, a great battle seemed to be the interest of the French, and it was in their option to fight or not. Their success at Badajos, and the surprise of the cavalry on the Caya, had made ample amends for their losses at Los Santos and Usagre, and now, when Badajos was succored, and the allied army in a manner driven into Portugal, Albuera seemed to be a victory. The general result of the Estremadura campaign had been favorable to them, and the political state of their affairs seemed to require some dazzling action to impose upon the Peninsulars. Their army was powerful, and as they were especially strong in cavalry, and on favorable ground for that arm, there could scarcely be a better opportunity for a blow, which would, if successful, have revenged Massena's disasters, and sent Lord Wellington back to Lisbon, perhaps from the Peninsula altogether; if unsuccessful, not involving any very serious consequences, because from their strength of horse and artillery, and nearness to Badajos, a fatal defeat was not to be expected. But the allied army was thought to be stronger by the whole amount of the Spanish troops than it really was; the position, very difficult to be examined, was confidently held by Lord Wellington, and no battle took place.

Napoleon's estimation of the weight of moral over physical force in war, was here finely exemplified. Both the French armies were conscious of recent defeats. Busaco, Sabugal, Fuentes, and the horrid field of Albuera, were fresh in their memory; the fierce blood there spilled still reeked in their nostrils; and if Cæsar, after a partial check at Dyrracchiaum, held it unsafe to fight a

\* Appendix 6, § 3.



pitched battle with recently defeated soldiers, however experienced or brave, Soult may well be excused, seeing that he knew there were divisions on the Caya, as good in all points, and more experienced than those he had fought with on the banks of the Albuera. The stern nature of the British soldier had been often before proved by him, and he could now draw no hope from the unskilfulness of the general. Lord Wellington's resolution to accept battle on the banks of the Caya was, nevertheless, one of as un-mixed greatness as the crisis was one of un-mixed danger to the cause he supported. For the Portuguese government, following up the system which I have already described, had reduced their troops to the lowest degree of misery, and the fortresses were at times only not abandoned to the enemy. The British government had taken the native troops into pay, but it had not undertaken to feed them; yet, such was the suffering of those brave men, that Wellington, after repeatedly refusing to assist them from the English stores, unable longer to endure the sight of their misfortunes, and to prevent them from disbanding, at last fed the six brigades, or three-fourths of the whole army, the English commissariat charging the expense to the subsidy. He hoped that the government would then supply the remnant, but they starved it likewise, and during the siege of Badajos these troops were of necessity thrown for subsistence upon the magazines of Elvas, which were thus exhausted; and what with desertion, famine, and sickness, that flourishing army which had mustered more than forty thousand good soldiers in line, at the time of Massena's invasion, could now scarcely produce fourteen thousand for a battle on which the fate of their country depended. The British troops, although large reinforcements had come out, and more were arriving, had so many sick and wounded, that scarcely twenty-eight thousand sabres and bayonets were in the field. The enemy had, therefore, a superiority of one fourth in artillery and infantry, and the strength of his cavalry was double that of the British.

To accept battle in such circumstances, military considerations only being had in view, would have been rash in the extreme; but the Portuguese government, besides throwing the subsistence of the troops upon Elvas, had utterly neglected that place, and Jerumenha, Campo Mayor, and Ouguella, Aronches and Santa Olay, which were the fortresses covering this frontier; neither had they drawn forth any means of transport from the country. The siege of Badajos had been entirely furnished from Elvas; but all the carts and animals of burden that could be found in the vicinity, or as far as the British detachments could go, and all the commissariat means to boot, were scarcely sufficient to convey the ammu-

ation, the stores, and the subsistence of the native troops, day by day, from Elvas to the camp; there was, consequently, no possibility of replacing these things from the British magazines at Abrantes and Lisbon.

When the allies crossed the Guadiana in retreat, Elvas had only ten thousand rounds of shot left, and not a fortnight's provision in store, even for her own garrison; her works were mouldering in many places from want of care, houses and inclosures encumbered her glacis, most of her guns were rendered unserviceable by the fire at Badajos, the remainder were very bad, and her garrison was composed of untried soldiers and militia. Jerumenha was not better looked to; Olaya, Campo Mayor, and Ouguella had nothing but their walls. It would appear then, that if Soult had been aware of this state of affairs, he might, under cover of the Guadiana, have collected his army below the confluence of the Caya, and then by means of the pontoon train from Badajos, and by the fords at which his cavalry did pass, have crossed the Guadiana, overpowered the right of the allies, and suddenly investing Elvas, have covered his army with lines, which would have insured the fall of that place; unless the English General, anticipating such an attempt, had, with very inferior numbers, defeated him between the Caya and Elvas. But this, in a perfectly open country, offering no advantages to the weaker army, would not have been easy. Soult also, by marching on the side of Estremos, could have turned the right, and menaced the communications of the allies with Abrantes, which would have obliged him to retreat and abandon Elvas, or fight to disadvantage. The position on the Caya was, therefore, taken up solely with reference to the state of political affairs. It was intended to impose upon the enemy, and it did so; Elvas and Jerumenha must otherwise have fallen.

While a front of battle was thus presented, the rear was cleared of all the hospitals and heavy baggage; workmen were day and night employed to restore the fortifications of the strong places, and guns, ammunition and provisions were brought up from Abrantes, by means of the animals and carts before employed in the siege of Badajos. Until all this was effected, Portugal was on the brink of perdition, but the true Peninsular character was now displayed, and in a manner that proclaims most forcibly the difficulties overcome by the English General, difficulties which have been little appreciated in his own country. The danger of Elvas had aroused all the bustle of the Portuguese government, and the Regency were at first frightened at the consequences of their own conduct; but when they found their own tardy efforts were forestalled by the diligence of Lord Wellington, they with prodigious

effrontery asserted, that he had exhausted Elvas for the supply of the British troops, and that they had replenished it!

His imperturbable firmness at this crisis was wonderful, and the more admirable, because Mr. Perceval's policy, prevailing in the cabinet, had left him without a halfpenny in the military chest, and almost without a hope of support in his own country; yet his daring was not a wild cast of the net for fortune; it was supported by great circumspection, and a penetration and activity that let no advantages escape. He had thrown a wide glance over the Peninsula, knew his true situation, had pointed out to the Spaniards how to push their war to advantage, while the French were thus concentrated in Estremadura, and at this period had a right to expect assistance from them; for Soult and Marmont were united at Badajos, the army of the north and the army of the centre were paralyzed by the flight of the King, and this was the moment when, Figueras having been surprised by Rovira, and Tarragona besieged by Suchet, the French armies of Catalonia and Aragon were entirely occupied with those places. Thus, nearly the whole of the Peninsula was open to the enterprises of the Spaniards. They could have collected, of Murcians and Valencians only, above forty thousand regulars, besides partisans, with which they might have marched against Madrid, while the Gallicians operated in Castile, and the Asturian army supported the enterprises of the northern partidas.

This favorable occasion was not seized. Julian Sanchez, indeed, cut off a convoy, menaced Salamanca, and blockaded Ciudad Rodrigo; Santocildes came down to Astorga, and as I have before observed, Mina and the northern chiefs harassed the French communications; some stir also was made by the guerillas near Madrid, and Suchet was harassed, but the commotion soon subsided; and a detachment from Madrid having surprised a congregation of partidas at Peneranda, killed many and recovered a large convoy which they had taken; and in this complicated war, which being spread like a spider's web over the whole Peninsula, any drag upon one part would have made the whole quiver to the most distant extremities, the regular armies effected nothing. Nor did any general insurrection of the people take place in the rear of the French, who retained all their fortified posts, while their civil administrations continued to rule in the great towns as tranquilly as if there was no war!

Lord Wellington's principal measure for dissipating the storm in his front had rested upon Blake. That General had wished him to fight beyond the Guadiana, and was not well pleased at being refused; wherefore the English General, instead of taking ten or twelve thousand Spaniards, and an uneasy colleague, into the line

of battle at Campo Mayor, where he knew by experience that they would quarrel with the Portuguese, and by their slowness, insubordination, and folly, would rather weaken than strengthen himself, delivered to Blake the pontoons used at Badajos, and concerted with him a movement down the right bank of the Guadiana. He was to recross that river at Mertola, and to fall upon Seville, which was but slightly guarded by a mixed force of French and Spaniards in Joseph's service; and this blow, apparently easy of execution, would have destroyed all the arsenals and magazines, which supported the blockade of Cadiz. Lord Wellington had therefore good reason to expect the raising of that siege, as well as the dispersion of the French army in its front. He likewise urged the Regency at Cadiz to push forward General Beguines from San Roque, against Seville, while the insurgents in the Ronda pressed the few troops left in Granada, on one side, and Freire, with the Murcian army, pressed them on the other.

Blake marched the 18th, recrossed the river at Mertola the 22d, remained inactive at Castellejos until the 30th, and sent his heavy artillery to Ayamonte by water; then, instead of moving direct with his whole force upon Seville, he detached only a small body, and with a kind of infatuation wasted two successive days in assaulting the castle of Niebla, a contemptible work garrisoned by three hundred Swiss, who had in the early part of the war abandoned the Spanish service. Being without artillery he could not succeed, and meanwhile Soult, hearing of his march, ordered Olivenza to be blown up, and taking some cavalry, and Godinot's division which formed the left of his army, passed the Morena by Santa Ollalla and moved rapidly upon Seville. From Monasterio he sent a detachment to relieve the castle of Niebla; and at the same time General Conroux, whose division was at Xeres de los Cavalheiro, crossed the mountains by the Aracena road, and endeavored to cut off Blake from Ayamonte.

Thus far, notwithstanding the failure at Niebla, the English General's project was crowned with success. The great army in his front was broken up, Soult was gone, Marmont was preparing to retire, and Portugal was safe. Blake's cavalry under Penne Villemur, and some infantry under Ballesteros, had also, during the attack on Niebla, appeared in front of Seville on the right bank of the Guadalquivir, and a slight insurrection took place at Carmona on the left bank. The Serranos, always in arms, were assisted by Beguines with three thousand men, and blockaded the town of Ronda; and Freire advancing with his Murcians beyond Lorca, menaced General Laval, who had succeeded Sebastiani in command of the fourth corps. In this crisis, General Daricau, unable

to keep the field, shut himself up in a great convent, which Soult had, in anticipation of such a crisis, fortified in the Triana suburb, before his invasion of Estremadura. But the Spanish troops of Joseph showed no disposition to quit him, the people of Seville remained tranquil, and Blake's incapacity ruined the whole combination.

Soult approached on the 6th of July, Ballesteros and Villemur immediately retired, and the insurrection at Carmona ceased. Blake, hearing of Conroux's march, precipitately fled from Niebla, and only escaped into Portugal by the assistance of a bridge laid for him at San Lucar de Guadiana by Col. Austin. He then resolved to embark some of his forces and sail to attack San Lucar de Barameda; but scarcely had a few men got on board, when the French advanced guard appeared, and he again fled in disorder to Ayamonte, and got into the island of Canelas, where fortunately a Spanish frigate and three hundred transports had unexpectedly arrived. While Ballesteros with the cavalry and three thousand infantry protected the embarkation, by taking a position on the Rio Piedra, Blake got on board with great confusion, and sailed to Cadiz, for the French had reinforced San Lucar de Barameda, and entered Ayamonte. The Portuguese militia, of the Algarves, were then called out; and Ballesteros, after losing some men on the Piedra, took post on the mountains of Aroches on his left, until the French retired, when he came back with his infantry and intrenched himself in Canelas. On this island he remained until August, and then embarked under the protection of the Portuguese militia at Villa Real, while his cavalry marched up the Guadiana to rejoin Castaños, who with a few troops still remained in Estremadura. A small battalion left in the castle of Paymago was soon after unsuccessfully attacked by the French, and this finished the long partisan warfare of the Condado de Niebla.

There was now nothing to prevent the French from again pressing the allies on the Caya, except the timid operations of Freire on the side of Granada, and these Soult was in march to repress. With indefatigable activity he had recalled the troops of the fourth corps, from Estremadura, to supply the place of the detachments which he had already sent, from Seville, Cadiz, Granada, and Malaga, to quell the insurrection in the Ronda; and while he thus prepared the means of attacking Freire, Beguines was driven back to San Roque, and the Serranos, as I have before observed, disgusted with the Spanish General's ill conduct, were upon the point of capitulating with the French. During these events in the Ronda, Godinot returned from the pursuit of Blake to Jaen, whence on the 7th of August he was directed to march against Pozalçon and

Baza, where the Murcian army was posted. Meanwhile Blake, re-landing his troops at Almeria, joined Freire; his intention was to have commenced active operations against Granada, but thinking it necessary to go first to Valencia where Palacios was making mischief, he left the army, which was above twenty-seven thousand strong, under Freire, and before he could return it was utterly dispersed.

#### ROUT OF BAZA.

General Quadra, who commanded the right wing of the Murcians, was at Pozalçon, and it is said, had orders to rejoin Freire, but disobeyed. The centre and left, under Freire himself, were at Venta de Bahul in front of Baza. The 8th, Soult, at the head of a mixed force of French and Spanish troops in Joseph's service, drove back the advanced guards from Guadix. The 9th he appeared in front of Bahul, where he discerned the Spanish army on strong ground, their front being covered by a deep ravine. As his object was to cut off the retreat upon Lorca and the city of Murcia, he only showed a few troops at first, and skirmished slightly, to draw Freire's attention, while Godinot attacked his right at Pozalçon and got in his rear. Godinot wasted time. His advanced guard, alone, had defeated Quadra, with great loss, but instead of entering Baza, he halted for the night near it; and during the darkness, the Spaniards, who had no other line of retreat, and were now falling back in confusion before Soult, passed through that place, and made for Lorca and Caravalsa. Soult's cavalry, however, soon cut this line, and the fugitives took to the by-roads, followed and severely harassed by the French horse.

At this time the whole province was in a defenceless state, but the people generally took arms to protect the city of Murcia. That place was intrenched, and the French Marshal, whose troops were few, and fatigued by constant marching, not thinking fit to persevere, especially as the yellow fever was raging at Carthagena, returned to Granada, whence he sent detachments to disperse some insurgents who had gathered under the Conde de Montijo in the Alpujaras. Thus Granada was entirely quieted.

Here it is impossible to refrain from admiring Soult's vigor and ability. We see him in the latter end of 1810, with a small force and in the depth of winter, taking Olivenza, Badajos, Albuquerque, Valencia de Alcantara, and Campo Mayor, defeating a great army, and capturing above twenty thousand men. Again, when unexpectedly assailed by Beresford in the north, by the Murcians in the east, by Ballesteros in the west, and by Lapeña and Graham in the south, he found means to repel three of them, to persevere in

the blockade of Cadiz, and to keep Seville tranquil, while he marched against the fourth. At Albuera he lost one of the fiercest battles upon human record, and that at a moment when the King by abandoning his throne had doubled every embarrassment; nevertheless, holding fast to Estremadura, he still maintained the struggle, and again taking the offensive obliged the allies to repossess the Guadiana. If he did not then push his fortune to the utmost, it must be considered that his command was divided, that his troops were still impressed with the recollection of Albuera, and that the genius of his adversary had worked out new troubles for him in Andalusia. With how much resolution and activity he repressed those troubles I have just shown; but above all things he is to be commended for the prudent vigor of his administration, which, in despite of the opposition of Joseph's Spanish counsellors, had impressed the Andalusians with such a notion of his power and resources, that no revolt of any real consequence took place, and none of his civic guards or "Escopeteros" failed him in the hour of need.

Let any man observe the wide extent of country he had to maintain; the frontiers fringed as it were with hostile armies, the interior suffering under war requisitions, the people secretly hating the French, a constant insurrection in the Ronda, and a national government and a powerful army in the Isla de Leon; innumerable English and Spanish agents, prodigal of money and of arms, continually instigating the people of Andalusia to revolt; the coast covered with hostile vessels, Gibraltar sheltering beaten armies on one side, Cadiz on another, Portugal on a third, Murcia on a fourth; the communication with France difficult, two battles lost, few reinforcements, and all the material means to be created in the country. Let any man, I say, consider this, and he will be convinced that it was no common genius that could remain unshaken amidst such difficulties; yet Soult not only sustained himself, but contemplated the most gigantic offensive enterprises, and was at all times an adversary to be dreaded. What though his skill in actual combat was not so remarkable as in some of his contemporaries; who can deny him firmness, activity, vigor, foresight, grand perception, and admirable arrangement? It is this combination of high qualities that forms a great captain.

## CHAPTER VII.

State of the war in Spain—Marmont ordered to take a central position in the valley of the Tagus—Constructs forts at Almaraz—French affairs assume a favorable aspect—Lord Wellington's difficulties augment—Remonstrances sent to the Brazils—System of intelligence described—Lord Wellington secretly prepares to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo—Marches into Beira, leaving Hill in the Alemtejo—French cavalry take a convoy of wine, get drunk and lose it again—General Dorsenne invades Galicia—Is stopped by the arrival of the allies on the Aguada—Blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo—Carlos España commences the formation of a new Spanish army—Preparations for the siege—Hill sends a brigade to Castello Branco.

WHILE Soult was clearing the eastern frontier of Andalusia, Marmont retired gradually from Badajos and quartered his troops in the valley of the Tagus, with exception of one division, which he left at Truxillo. At the same time the fifth corps retired to Zafra, and thus Lord Wellington found himself relieved from the presence of the French, at the very moment when he had most reason to fear their efforts. He had by this time secured the fortresses on the frontier, his troops were beginning to suffer from the terrible pestilence of the Guadiana, and this was sufficient to prevent him from renewing the siege of Badajos, if Marmont's position had not forbid that measure; he therefore resolved to adopt a new system of operations. But to judge of the motives which influenced his conduct we must again cast a hasty glance over the general state of the Peninsula, which was hourly changing.

In Catalonia, Suchet had stormed Tarragona, seized Montserrat, and dispersed the Catalan army. A division of the army of the centre had chased the partidas from Guadalaxara and Cuença, and re-established the communications with Aragon. Valencia and Murcia were in fear and confusion, both from internal intrigues and from the double disasters on each side of their frontier, at Baza and Tarragona.

The French Emperor was pouring reinforcements into Spain by the northern line; these troops as usual scoured the country to put down the guerillas on each side of their march, and nearly forty thousand fresh men, mostly old soldiers from the army of the reserve, were come, or coming into the north of Spain. The Young Guard, which was at Burgos, under General Dorsenne, was increased to seventeen thousand men; and as no efforts, except those already noticed, were made by the Spaniards to shake the French hold of the country while Soult and Marmont were on the Guadiana, the French generals were enabled to plan extensive measures of further conquest; and the more readily, because the King



was now on his return from Paris, in apparent harmony with his brother, and the powers and duties of all parties were defined.

Suchet, urged by Napoleon to hasten his preparations for the invasion of Valencia, was resolved to be under the walls of that city in the middle of September, and Soult was secretly planning a gigantic enterprise, calculated to change the whole aspect of the war. In the north, when the King, who re-entered Madrid the 14th, had passed Valladolid, the imperial guards entered Leon; thirteen thousand men of the army of the north were concentrated at Benevente on the 17th, and Santocildes retired into the mountains. Bessières then sent a large convoy to Ciudad Rodrigo, but following the treaty between Joseph and Napoleon, returned himself to France, and General Dorsenne taking the command of the army of the north, prepared to invade Galicia.

Meanwhile Marmont was directed to resign the whole of Castile and Leon to the protection of the army of the north, and to withdraw all his posts and dépôts, with the exception of the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, which was to be changed at a more convenient time. His line of communication was to be with Madrid, and that city was to be his chief dépôt and base; he was to take positions in the valley of the Tagus, and at Truxillo; to fortify either Alcantara or Almaraz, and to secure the communication across the river.

Thus posted, the Emperor judged that Marmont could more effectually arrest the progress of the allies than in any other. The invasion of Andalusia, for the purpose of raising the siege of Cadiz, was, he said, the only object the allies had at the moment, but it could always be frustrated by Marmont's moving against their flank; and with respect to the north, the allies having no object on that side, would be unlikely to make any serious attempt, because they must in time be overmatched, as the French fell back upon their resources. Marmont could also act against their right flank, as he could against their left flank, if they marched upon Andalusia; and while stationary he protected Madrid, and gave power and activity to the King's administration.

In pursuance of these instructions, Marmont, who had remained in Estremadura to cover Soult's operations against Blake and the Murcians, now proceeded to occupy Talavera, and other posts in the valley of the Tagus; and he placed a division at Truxillo, the castle of which place, as well as that of Medellin, was repaired. Another division occupied Placentia, with posts in the passes of Bejar and Baños; Girard's division of the fifth corps remained at Zafra, to serve as a point of connection between Marmont and Soult, and to support Badajos, which by a wise provision of Na-

oleon's, was now garrisoned with detachments from the three armies of the centre, of Portugal, and of the south. This gave each general a direct interest in moving to its succor, and in the same policy Ciudad Rodrigo was to be wholly garrisoned by the army of the north, that Marmont might have no temptation to neglect the army of the south, under pretence of succoring Ciudad.

To restore and maintain Alcantara was beyond the means of the Duke of Ragusa; he therefore repaired the bridge of Almaraz, and constructed two strong forts, one at each side, to protect it, and to serve as an intermediate field *dépôt*; a third and more considerable fort was also built on the high ridge of Mirabete, to insure a passage over the hills from Almaraz to Truxillo. A free intercourse with the army of the south was thus secured on one side, and on the other, the passes of Baños and Bejar, and the Roman road of Puerto Pico, which had been restored in 1810, served for communication with the army of the north.

The French affairs had now assumed a very favorable aspect. There was indeed a want of money, but the Generals were obeyed with scrupulous attention by the people of Spain, not only within the districts occupied by them, but even in those villages where the guerillas were posted. This obedience Lord Wellington attributed entirely to fear, and hoped, as the exactions were heavy, that the people would at last fight or fly from their habitations on the approach of a French soldier; but this did not happen generally, and to me it appears, that the obedience was rather a symptom of the subjection of the nation, and that with a judicious mixture of mildness and severity perfect submission would have followed if England had not kept the war alive.

On the other hand the weakness and anarchy of the Spaniards were daily increasing, and the disputes between the British General and the Portuguese government arrived at such a height, that Lord Wellington, having drawn up powerful and clear statements of his grievous situation, sent one to the Brazils and the other to his own government, with a positive intimation that if an entirely new system was not immediately adopted he would no longer attempt to carry on the contest. Lord Wellesley, taking his stand upon this ground, made strenuous exertions in both countries to prevent the ruin of the cause; but Lord Wellington, while expecting the benefit of his brother's interference, had to contend with the most surprising difficulties, and to seek in his own personal resources for the means of even defending Portugal. He had sent Marshal Beresford to Lisbon, immediately after Albuera, to superintend the reorganization and restoration of the Portuguese forces, and Beresford had sent Mr. De Lemos, an officer of his own staff,

to the Brazils, to represent the inconveniences arising from the interference of the Regency in the military affairs. On the other hand, the Souzas sent one Vasconcellos, who had been about the British head-quarters as their spy, to Rio Janeiro, and thus the political intrigues became more complicated than ever.

But with respect to the war, Wellington had penetrated Napoleon's object, when he saw Marmont's position in the valley of the Tagus; he felt the full force of the Emperor's military reasoning, yet he did not despair, if he could overcome the political obstacles, to gain some advantage. He had now a powerful and experienced British force under his command, the different departments and the staff of the army were every day becoming more skilful and ready, and he had also seen enough of his adversaries to estimate their powers. The King he knew to be no general, and discontented with the marshals; Soult he had found able and vast in his plans, but too cautious in their execution; Marmont, with considerable vigor, had already shown some rashness in the manner he had pushed Reynier's division forward, after passing the Tagus; and it was, therefore, easy to conceive that no very strict concert would be maintained in their combined operations.

Lord Wellington had also established some good channels of information. He had a number of spies amongst the Spaniards who were living within the French lines; a British officer in disguise constantly visited the French armies in the field; a Spanish state-counsellor, living at the head-quarters of the first corps, gave intelligence from that side, and a guitar player of celebrity, named Fuentes, repeatedly making his way to Madrid, brought advice from thence. Mr. Stuart, under cover of vessels licensed to fetch corn for France, kept *chasse marées* constantly plying along the Biscay coast, by which he not only acquired direct information, but facilitated the transmission of intelligence from the land spies, amongst whom the most remarkable was a cobbler, living in a little hutch at the end of the bridge of Irun. This man, while plying his trade, continued for years, without being suspected, to count every French soldier that passed in or out of Spain by that passage, and transmitted their numbers by the *chasse marées* to Lisbon.

With the exception of the state spy at Victor's head-quarters, who being a double traitor was infamous, all the persons thus employed were very meritorious. The greater number, and the cleverest also, were Spanish gentlemen, alcaldes, or poor men, who disdain rewards and disregarding danger, acted from a pure spirit of patriotism, and are to be lauded alike for their boldness, their talent, and their virtue. Many are dead. Fuentes was drowned in passing a river, on one of his expeditions; and the alcalde of Caceres,

a man of the clearest courage and patriotism, who expended his own property in the cause, and spurned at remuneration, was on Ferdinand's restoration cast into a dungeon, where he perished; a victim to the unbounded ingratitude and baseness of the monarch he had served so well!

With such means, Lord Wellington did not despair of baffling the deep policy of the Emperor in the field. He thought that the saying of Henry the Fourth of France, that "*large armies would starve and small ones be beaten in Spain,*" was still applicable. He felt that a solid possession of Portugal and her resources, which, through his brother's aid, he hoped to have, would enable him either to strike partial blows against the French, or oblige them to concentrate in large masses, which, confident in his own martial genius, he felt he could hold in check, while the Spaniards ruined the small posts, and disorganized the civil administrations in their rear. Hitherto, indeed, the Spaniards had not made any such efforts except by the *partidas*, which were insufficient; but time, his own remonstrances, and the palpable advantages of the system, he trusted would yet teach them what to do.

Having deeply meditated upon these matters and received his reinforcements from England, he resolved to leave Hill with ten thousand infantry, a division of cavalry, and four brigades of artillery, about Portalegre, Villa Viciosa, and Estremos. From these rich towns, which were beyond the influence of the Gadiana fever, the troops could rapidly concentrate either for an advance or retreat; and the latter was secured upon Abrantes, or upon the communication with Beira, by Niza and Villa Velha, where a permanent boat-bridge had now been established. The front was protected by Elvas, Jerumenha, Campo Mayor, and Ouguella; and Castaños also remained in Estremadura with the fifth army, which, by the return of the cavalry from Ayamonte and the formation of Downie's legion, now amounted to about a thousand infantry and nine hundred horse. This force, placed on the side of Montijo, had Albuquerque and Valencia de Alcantara as posts of support, and a retreat either by the fords of the Tagus near the bridge of Alcantara, or upon Portugal by Marvao and Castello de Vide. Hill's position was thus so well covered, that he could not be surprised, nor even pressed except by a very strong army; and he was always on the watch, as we shall hereafter find, to make incursions against the division of the fifth corps, which remained in Estremadura. The rest of the army was then placed in quarters of refreshment at Castello de Vide, Marvao, and other places near the Tagus, partly to avoid the Gadiana fever, partly to meet Marmont's movement to that river.

When this disposition was made, the English General arranged his other measures of offence. The conduct of the Portuguese government and the new positions of the French armies had, as Napoleon had foreseen, left him no means of undertaking any sustained operation; but, as he was ignorant of the great strength of the army of the north, he hoped to find an opportunity of taking Ciudad Rodrigo before Marmont could come to his assistance. For this purpose he had caused a fine train of battering guns and mortars, together with a reinforcement of British artillerymen, which had arrived at Lisbon from England, to be shipped in large vessels, and then with some ostentation made them sail as it were for Cadiz. At sea they were however shifted on board small craft, and while the original vessels actually arrived at Cadiz and Gibraltar, the guns were secretly brought first to Oporto and then in boats to Lamego. During this process several engineers, artillery, and commissariat officers, were sent to meet and transport these guns, and the necessary stores for a siege, to Villaponte near Celerico; and as one of the principal magazines of the army was at Lamego, and a constant intercourse was kept between it and Celerico, another great dépôt, the arrival and passage of the guns and stores to their destination was not likely to attract the attention of the French spies.

Other combinations were also employed, both to deceive the enemy and to prepare the means for a sudden attack, before the troops commenced their march for Beira; but the hiding of such extensive preparations from the French would have been scarcely possible, if the personal hatred borne to the invaders by the Peninsulars, combined with the latter's peculiar subtlety of character, had not prevented any information spreading abroad, beyond the fact that artillery had arrived at Oporto. The operation of bringing sixty-eight huge guns, with proportionate stores, across nearly fifty miles of mountain, was however one of no mean magnitude; five thousand draft bullocks were required for the train alone, and above a thousand militia were for several weeks employed merely to repair the road.\*

The allies broke up from the Caya the 21st of July, and they had received considerable reinforcements, especially in cavalry, but they were sickly and required a change of cantonments; hence, when an intercepted despatch gave reason to believe that Ciudad Rodrigo was in want of provisions, Wellington suddenly crossed the Tagus at Villa Velha, and marched in the beginning of August by Castello Branco and Penamacor towards Rodrigo, hoping to surprise it in a starving state, but giving out that his movement was for the sake of healthy quarters. His movement was unmolested

\* Appendix 7.

save by some French dragoons, from the side of Placentia, who captured a convoy of seventy mules loaded with wine near Pedragoa, and getting drunk with their booty attacked some Portuguese infantry, who repulsed them and recovered the mules,\* but there were other ostensible objects besides the obvious one of removing from the well-known pestilence of the Guadiana, which contributed to blind the French as to the secret motives of the English General. We have seen that Dorsenne was menacing Galicia, and that Soult was in full operation against the Murcians; it was supposed that he intended to invade Murcia itself, and therefore the march of the allies had the double object of saving Galicia by menacing the rear of the invading army; and of relieving Murcia by forcing Marmont to look after Ciudad Rodrigo, and thus draw him away from the support of Soult, who would not, it was supposed, then quit Andalusia.

Galicia was meanwhile in great danger, for the partidas of the north had been vigorously repressed by Caffarelli and Reille, which enabled Dorsenne to collect about twenty thousand men on the Esla. Abadia, who had succeeded Santocildes, was posted with about seven thousand disciplined men behind this river, and he had a reserve of fifteen hundred at Foncebadon; but he could make no head, for to this number the Gallician army had again dwindled, and these were starving.† On the 25th, the French, having passed the river in four columns, made a concentric march upon Astorga. Abadia, whose rear-guard sustained a sharp conflict near La Baneza, retreated, precisely by the same line as Sir John Moore had done in 1809, and with about the same relative proportion of force; but as he only took the Foncebadon road and did not use the same diligence and skill as that general, the enemy, forestalling him by Manzanal and Bembibre, cut him off from Villa Franca del Bierzo, and from the road to Lugo, and on the 27th drove him into the Val des Orres. During this operation the division of the army of the north, which Bessières had sent with the convoy to Ciudad Rodrigo, entered that place and returned to Salamanca.

The Spanish General having thus lost his line of communication with Lugo, and the few stores he possessed at Villa Franca, took post at Domingo Flores, in the Val des Orres, where he entered a strong country, and under the worst circumstances could retire upon Portugal and save his troops, if not his province.‡ But his army, which was in the utmost distress before for shoes

\* General Harvey's Journal.

† Sir H. Douglas's Correspondence, MS.

‡ General Walker's Correspondence, MS. Abadia's ditto, MS.

and clothing, was now ready to disband from misery, and the consternation in Galicia was excessive. That province, torn by faction, stood helpless before the invader, who could, and would, have taken both Coruña and Ferrol, but for the sudden arrival of the allies on the Coa, which obliged him, for his own safety, to return to the plains. Souham, also, who was coming from Burgos, by forced marches, to support Dorsenne, halted at Rio Seco, and Abadia did not fail to ascribe all this to the loss he had inflicted, but his vanity was laughed at.

To have thus saved Galicia was a great thing. That kingdom was the base of all the operations against the line of communication with France; from thence went forth those British squadrons which nourished the guerilla warfare in Biscay, in the Montaña, in Navarre, in the Rioja, and the Asturias; it was the chief resource for the supply of cattle to the allied army, it was the outwork of Portugal, and honestly and vigorously governed, would have been more important than Catalonia. But, like the rest of Spain, it was always weak from disorders, and, if the allies had remained in Alemtejo, there was nothing to prevent Dorsenne from conquering it; for, though he should not have taken Ferrol and Coruña, the points of St. Jago, Lugo, Villa Franca, and Orense would have given him an entire command of the interior, and the Spaniards holding the ports only would not have been able to dislodge him.

Lord Wellington arrived upon the Coa about the 8th of August, intending, as I have said, first a close blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo, and finally a siege; it was, however, soon known that the French had, on the 6th, supplied the place for two months, and the first part of the design was therefore relinquished. The troops were then quartered near the sources of the Coa and Agueda, close to the line of communication between Marmont and Dorsenne, and in a country where there was still some corn. If the enemy advanced in superior numbers, the entire army could retire through a strong country to a position of battle near Sabugal, whence the communication with Hill was direct. Nor was the rest of Beira left unprotected, because the French would have exposed their left flank by any advance in the direction of Almeida, and the allies could, by Guarda, send detachments to the valley of the Mondego, in time to secure the magazines at Celerico. The line of supply from Lamego along which the battering-train was now moving, was, however, rather exposed.

While the army was in this position, the preparations for the siege went on briskly, until Wellington learned, contrary to his former belief, that the disposable force of the army of the north

was above twenty thousand good troops, and, consequently, that Ciudad Rodrigo could not be attacked in face of that corps, and of Marmont's army. Then changing his plan, he resolved to blockade the place, and wait for some opportunity to strike a sudden blow, either against the fortress or against the enemy's troops; for it was the foundation of his hopes, that as the French could not long remain in masses, for want of provisions, and that he could check those masses on the frontier of Portugal, so he could always force them to concentrate, or suffer the loss of some important post. But it is worthy of observation, that his plans were based on calculations which did not surprise the Gallician army. He had no expectation that it would act at all, or if it did, that it would act effectually. It had no cavalry, and the infantry being undisciplined, dared not enter the plains in face of the enemy's horsemen; yet this was in August, 1811, and Galicia had not seen the face of an enemy since June, 1809!

Early in September, Marmont, pushing a detachment from Placentia through the passes, surprised a British cavalry piquet, at St. Martin de Trebejo, and opened his communications with Dorsenne. Nevertheless Lord Wellington formed the blockade. His head-quarters were fixed at Guinaldo, the fifth division was placed at Perales, in observation of Marmont, and the first division, now commanded by General Graham, occupied Penamacor. A battery of artillery was withdrawn from Hill, and three brigades of that general's corps, reinforced by a Portuguese regiment, passed the Tagus, and were placed on the Ponçul, in advance of Castello Branco, to protect the magazines on that line of communication. Meanwhile the battering-train was collected at Villa de Ponte, the troops were employed to prepare gabions and fascines, and the engineers instructed two hundred men of the line in the duties of sappers. The bridge over the Coa, at Almeida, which had been broken by Massena, was permanently repaired, and the works of Almeida itself were ordered to be once more restored to form a place of arms for the battering-train and stores. Carlos d'España came also to Leon to form a new army under the protection of the allies, but he was without officers, arms, money, or stores, and his force was a mere name.