





ASSAULT OF S^t SEBASTIAN
August 31st
1813.

Drawn by Genl Napier.

CHAPTER III.

Siege of St. Sebastian—Convent of Bartolomeo stormed—Assault on the place fails—Causes thereof—Siege turned into a blockade, and the guns embarked at Passages—French make a successful sally.

TURNING from Catalonia to Navarre and Guipuscoa, we shall find Wellington's indomitable energy overcoming every difficulty. It has been shown how the Anglo-Portuguese troops were appointed to cover the siege of San Sebastian and the blockade of Pampeluna, while the Spanish divisions attacked Santona on the coast, and the castles of Daroca, Morella, and Zaragoza in the interior. These operations required many men, and Carlos d'España's division, four thousand strong, which had remained at Miranda del Castanar to improve its organization when Wellington advanced to the Ebro, was now coming up. Passages was the only port near the scene of operations suited for the supply of the army, but as it was between the covering and besieging armies, the stores and guns once landed were in danger from every movement of the enemy; the Deba river between San Sebastian and Bilbao, was unfit for large vessels, and no permanent dépôt could be established nearer than Bilbao. At that port therefore, and at St. Ander and Coruña, the great dépôts of the army were fixed, the stores being transported to them from the establishments in Portugal. But the French held Santoña, their privateers interrupted the communication along the coast of Spain, and American privateers did the same between Lisbon and Coruña; the intercourse between San Sebastian and the ports of France was scarcely molested; and the most urgent remonstrances failed to procure a sufficient naval force on the coast of Biscay. It was in these circumstances Wellington commenced

THE SIEGE OF SAN SEBASTIAN.

This place, built on a low sandy isthmus, had the harbor on one side the river Urumea on the other. Behind it rose the Monte Orgullo, a rugged cone four hundred feet high, washed by the ocean, and its southern face covered with batteries and overlooking the town, was cut off from the latter by defensive walls. It was crowned by the small castle of La Mota, which was itself commanded at a distance of thirteen hundred yards by the Monte Olia which rose beyond the Urumea. The land front was three

hundred and fifty yards wide, stretching quite across the isthmus. It consisted of a high curtain or rampart, very solid, strengthened by a lofty casemated flat bastion or cavalier placed in the centre, and by half bastions at either end. A regular horn-work was pushed out from this front; and six hundred yards beyond the horn-work the isthmus was closed by the ridge of San Bartolomeo, at the foot of which stood the suburb of San Martin.

On the opposite side of the Urumea were certain sandy hills called the *Chofres*, through which the road from Passages passed to the wooden bridge over the river, and thence, by the suburb of Santa Catalina, along the top of a sea-wall which formed a *fausse braye* for the horn-work. The flanks of the town were protected by simple ramparts; one washed by the water of the harbor, the other by the Urumea, which at high tide covered four of the twenty-seven feet comprised in its elevation. This was the weak side of the fortress, for though covered by the river there was only a single wall ill-flanked by two old towers and the half-bastion of San Elmo, which was situated at the extremity of the rampart close under the Monte Orgullo. There was no ditch, no counter-scarp, no glacis; the wall could be seen to its base from the Chofre hills, at distances varying from five hundred to a thousand yards; and when the tide was out, the Urumea left a dry strand under the rampart as far as St. Elmo. However the guns from the batteries of Monte Orgullo, especially that called the *Mirador*, could see this strand. The other flank was secured by the harbor, in the mouth of which was a rocky island called Santa Clara, where the French had established a post of twenty-five men.

Before the battle of Vittoria, San Sebastian was nearly dismantled; many of the guns had been removed to form battering-trains or to arm smaller ports on the coast; there were no bomb-proofs, nor palisades, nor out-works; the wells were foul and the place supplied by a single aqueduct. Joseph's defeat restored its importance as a fortress. Emanuel Rey entered it the 22d of June, with the escort of the convoy which quitted Vittoria the day before the battle. The town was thus filled with emigrant Spanish families, with ministers and other persons attached to the court; the population, ordinarily eight thousand, was increased to sixteen thousand and confusion prevailed.* Rey, pushed by necessity, immediately forced all persons not residents to march at once to France, granting them only a guard of one hundred men; the people of quality went by sea, the others by land, and fortunately all arrived, for the *partidas* would have given them no quarter. Foy had while retreating thrown a reinforcement into

* Bellas' Journal of French Sieges in Spain.

the place, and next day Mendizabel's Spaniards appeared on the hills behind the ridge of San Bartolomeo and on Chofres. Rey then burned the wooden bridge and both the suburbs, and commenced fortifying the heights of San Bartolomeo, which the Spaniards slightly attacked the 29th and were repulsed.

On the 1st of July the governor of Gueteria abandoned that place, and with detestable ferocity secretly left a lighted train which exploded the magazine and destroyed many of the inhabitants.* His troops, three hundred, entered San Sebastian, and at the same time a vessel from St. Jean de Luz arrived with fifty-six cannoneers and some workmen; the garrison was thus increased to three thousand men, and all persons not able to provide subsistence for themselves in advance were ordered to quit the place. Mendizabel then cut off the aqueduct, made approaches towards the head of the burned bridge on the right of the Urumea, and molested the workmen on the heights of Bartolomeo; and on the 3d, the *Surveillante* frigate, a sloop, and some small craft blockaded the harbor; yet the French vessels from St. Jean de Luz continued to enter by night. The same day the governor made a sally with eleven hundred men to obtain news, and after some hours' skirmishing returned with a few prisoners.

The 6th, French vessels bringing a detachment of troops and a considerable convoy of provisions came from St. Jean de Luz. The 7th, Mendizabel tried, unsuccessfully, to set fire to the convent of San Bartolomeo. The 9th, Graham arrived with a corps of British and Portuguese troops, and the 13th, the Spaniards marched, some to reinforce the force blockading Santona, the remainder to rejoin the fourth army of Bidassoa. At this time Reille held the entrances to the Bastan by Vera and Echallar, but Wellington drove him thence on the 15th, and established the seventh and light divisions there to cover the passes over the Peña de Haya, by which the siege might have been interrupted.

Before Graham arrived the French had constructed a redoubt on the heights of San Bartolomeo, and connected it with the convent of that name which they also fortified. These outworks were supported by posts in the ruined houses of the suburb of San Martin behind, and by a low circular redoubt formed of casks on the main road, half-way between the convent and the horn-work. Hence to reduce the place, working along the isthmus, it was necessary to carry in succession three lines of defence covering the town and a fourth at the foot of Monte Orgullo, before the castle of La Mota could be assailed. These works had seventy-six

* Sir G. Collier's Despatch.

pieces mounted, and others were afterwards obtained from France by sea.

The besieging army consisted of the fifth division under Oswald, the independent Portuguese brigades of J. Wilson and Bradford reinforced by detachments from the first division. Thus, including the artillerymen, some seamen commanded by Lieutenant O'Reilly of the *Surveillante*, and one hundred regular sappers and miners, now for the first time used in the sieges of the Peninsula, nearly ten thousand men were employed. There was also a new battering-train, originally prepared to besiege Burgos, consisting of fourteen iron twenty-four pounders, six eight-inch brass howitzers, four sixty-eight-pound iron carronades, and four iron ten-inch mortars.* To these were added six twenty-four pounders, lent by the ships of war, and six eighteen pounders which had moved with the army from Portugal, making altogether forty pieces commanded by Colonel Dickson. The distance from the *dépôt* of siege at Passages to the Chofres was one mile and a half of good road, and a pontoon-bridge was laid over the Urumea river above these hills; but from thence to the height of Bartolomeo was more than five miles of very bad road.

Early in July the fortress had been twice closely examined by Major Smith, the engineer who had so ably defended Tarifa. He proposed a plan of siege, founded upon the facility furnished by the Chofres to destroy the flanks, rake the principal front and form a breach with the same batteries; the works being at the same time secured, except at low water, by the Urumea. Counter-batteries on the left of that river were to rake the line of defence in which the breach was to be formed; and against the castle and its outworks he relied principally upon vertical fire, instancing the reduction of Fort Bourbon in the West Indies in proof of its efficacy. This plan would probably have reduced San Sebastian in a reasonable time without any remarkable loss of men; Wellington approved of it, though he doubted the efficacy of the vertical fire, and ordered the siege to be commenced. He renewed his approval when he had examined the works in person, and all his orders were in the same spirit; but as neither the plan nor his orders were followed, the siege, which should have been an ordinary event of war, has obtained a mournful celebrity; and Wellington has been unjustly charged with contemning the maxims of the great masters. Anxious as he was to save time, yet he did not urge the engineer beyond the rules. *Take the place in the quickest manner, yet do not from over-speed fail to take it*, was the sense of his instructions; but Graham, one of England's best soldiers, was

* Jones's Sieges.

endowed with a genius more intuitive than reflective; and this joined to his natural modesty and a certain easiness of temper, caused him at times to abandon his own correct conceptions for the less judicious counsels of those who advised deviations from the original plan.

In the night of the 10th two batteries were commenced against the convent and redoubt of San Bartolomeo; and next night four batteries, to contain twenty of the heaviest guns and four eight-inch howitzers, were marked out on the Chofre sand-hills, at distances varying from six hundred to thirteen hundred yards from the eastern rampart of the town. The river was supposed to be unfordable, wherefore no parallel was made, yet good trenches of communications, and subsequently regular approaches were formed. Two attacks were thus established. One on the right bank of the Urumea for the unattached Portuguese brigades; one on the left bank for the fifth division; but most of the troops were at first encamped on the right bank to facilitate a junction with the covering army in the event of a general battle.

On the 14th a French sloop entered the harbor with supplies, and the batteries of the left attack, under the direction of the German Major Hartman, opened against San Bartolomeo, throwing hot shot into that building. The besieged responded with musketry from the redoubt, with heavy guns from the town, and with a field-piece which they had mounted on the belfry of the convent itself. The 15th Sir Richard Fletcher took command of the engineers, but Major Smith retained the direction of the attack from the Chofre hills and Wellington's orders continued to pass through his hands. This day the batteries of the left attack, aided by howitzers from the right of Urumea, set the convent on fire, silenced the musketry of the besieged, and so damaged the defences, that the Portuguese of the fifth division were ordered to feel the enemy: they were however repulsed with great loss, the French sallied, and the firing did not cease until nightfall.

A battery for seven additional guns to play against Bartolomeo was now commenced on the right of the Urumea, and the original batteries set fire to the convent several times, yet the flames were extinguished by the garrison.

In the night of the 16th Rey sounded the Urumea as high as Santa Catalina, designing to pass over and storm the batteries on the Chofres; but the fords discovered were shifting and the difficulty of execution deterred him from this project. The 17th, the convent being nearly in ruins, the assault was ordered without waiting for the effect of the new battery raised on the other side of the Urumea. The storming party was formed in two columns.

Detachments from Wilson's Portuguese, supported by the light company of the ninth British regiment and three companies of the royals under General Hay, were destined to assail the redoubt; General Bradford, leading the other column, composed of Portuguese supported by three companies of the ninth British regiment under Colonel Cameron, was to assail the convent.

ASSAULT OF SAN BARTOLOMEO.

At ten o'clock in the morning two heavy six-pounders opened against the redoubt, and a sharp fire of musketry from the French, who had been reinforced and occupied the suburb of San Martin, announced their resolution to fight. The allied troops were assembled behind the crest of the hill overlooking the convent and the first signal was given; but the Portuguese advanced so slowly at both attacks that the supporting companies of the ninth regiment, passing through them, fell upon the enemy with the usual impetuosity of British soldiers. Cameron leading his grenadiers down hill was exposed to a heavy cannonade from the horn-work, yet he gained the cover of a wall fifty yards from the convent and there awaited the second signal. His rapid advance, which threatened to cut off the garrison from the suburb, joined to the fire of the two six-pounders and some other field-pieces on the farther side of the Urumea, caused the French to abandon the redoubt; Cameron then jumped over the wall and assaulted both the convent and the houses of the suburb. At the latter a fierce struggle ensued and Captain Woodham of the ninth was killed in the upper room of a house to which he fought his way from below; but the grenadiers carried the convent with such rapidity that the French, unable to explode some small mines, hastily joined the troops in the suburbs. There the fighting continued, and the affair was becoming doubtful, when the remaining companies of the ninth regiment arrived and the suburb with much fighting was won. At the right attack the company of the ninth, although retarded by a ravine, a thick hedge, the slowness of the Portuguese and a heavy fire, entered the abandoned redoubt with little loss; but all the troops were then, contrary to Oswald's orders, rashly led against the cask redoubt, and were beaten back by the enemy.

Of the French two hundred and forty men fell. On the British side, the companies of the ninth under Cameron alone lost seven officers and sixty men killed or wounded, and the whole operation although successful, was an error. The battery on the right of the Urumea was not opened, wherefore, either the assault was precipitated or the battery was not necessary; but the loss justified the conception of the battery.

When the action ceased the engineers made a lodgment in the redoubt, and commenced two batteries for eight pieces to rake the horn-work and the eastern rampart of the place. Two other batteries, to contain four sixty-eight pound carronades and four ten-inch mortars, were also commenced on the right bank of the Uru-mea. The besieged then threw up traverses on the land front to meet the raking fire of the besiegers, and the latter dragged four pieces up the Monte Olia to plunge into the Mirador and other batteries on the Monte Orgullo. In the night a lodgment was made on the ruins of San Martin, the batteries at the right attack were armed, and two additional mortars dragged up the Monte Olia; on the 19th all the batteries at both attacks were armed, and in the night two approaches were commenced from the suburb of San Martin towards the cask redoubt, from whence the French were driven. On the 20th the whole of the batteries opened their fire, the greatest part being directed to form the breach.

Smith's plan was similar to that followed by Marshal Berwick a century before.* He proposed a lodgment on the horn-work before the breach should be assailed; but he had not then read the description of that siege, and therefore unknowingly fixed the breaching-point precisely where the wall had been most strongly rebuilt after Berwick's attack. This was the first fault, yet a slight one, because the wall did not resist the batteries very long; it was a more serious matter that Graham, at the suggestion of the commander of the artillery, began his operations by breaching. Smith was opposed to it, but Fletcher acquiesced reluctantly, on the understanding that the ruining of the defences was only postponed, an understanding afterwards forgotten.

The result of the first day's battery was not satisfactory. The weather was bad, the guns mounted on ship carriages failed, one twenty-four pounder was rendered unserviceable by the enemy, another useless by an accident, a captain of engineers was killed and the besiegers' shot had little effect upon the solid wall. In the night however the ship-guns were mounted on better carriages, and a parallel across the isthmus was projected; but the greatest part of the workmen, to avoid a tempest sought shelter in the suburb of San Martin, and when day broke only one-third of the work was performed.

On the 21st the place was summoned, but the governor refused to receive the letter, and the firing was resumed. The main wall still resisted, yet the parapets and embrasures crumbled away, and the batteries on Monte Olia plunged into the horn-work, with such effect, although at sixteen hundred yards distance, that the be-

* Notes of the Siege by Sir C. Smith, MSS.

sieged having no bomb-proofs were forced to dig trenches to protect themselves. The counter-fire, directed solely against the breaching-batteries, was feeble, but at midnight a shell thrown from the castle into the bay gave the signal for a sally, and during the firing which ensued several French vessels with supplies entered the harbor. This night also the besieged isolated the breach by cuts in the rampart and other defences. On the other hand the besiegers' parallel across the isthmus was completed, and in its progress laid bare the mouth of a drain, four feet high and three feet wide, containing the pipe of the aqueduct cut off by the Spaniards. Through this narrow opening Lieutenant Reid of the engineers, a young and zealous officer, crept even to the counterscarp of the horn-work, and finding the passage there closed by a door, returned without an accident. Thirty barrels of powder were then placed in the drain, and eight feet was stopped with sand-bags, thus forming a globe of compression designed to blow, as through a tube, so much rubbish over the counterscarp as might fill the narrow ditch of the horn-work.

On the 22d the fire from the batteries, unexampled from its rapidity and accuracy, opened what appeared to the besiegers a very practicable breach in the eastern flank wall, between the towers of Los Hornos and Las Mesquitas. The counter-fire of the besieged then slackened, yet the descent into the town from the breach was more than twelve feet perpendicular; and the garrison were seen from Monte Olia diligently working at the interior defences to receive the assault: they added also another gun to the battery of St. Elmo, just under the Mirador battery, to flank the front attack. On the other hand the besiegers had placed four sixty-eight pound carronades in battery to play on the defences of the breach, yet the general fire slackened because the guns were greatly enlarged at the vents with constant practice.

On the 23d, the sea blockade being null, the French vessels returned to France with the badly wounded men; and that day the besiegers, judging the breach between the towers quite practicable, turned the guns, at the suggestion of Oswald, to break the wall on the right of the main breach. Smith opposed this, urging, that no advantage would be gained by making a second opening to get at which the troops must first pass the great breach; that time would be lost to the besiegers, and there was a manifest objection on account of the tide and depth of water at the new point attacked. His counsel was overruled, and in the course of the day, the wall being thin the stroke heavy and quick, a second breach thirty feet wide was rendered practicable. Then the fire of the besieged being much diminished, the ten-inch mortars and sixty-eight pound

carronades were turned upon the defences of the great breach; and upon a stockade which separated the high curtain on the land front from the lower works of the flank against which the attack was conducted. The nearest houses were soon in flames, which spreading rapidly destroyed some of the defences of the besieged and menaced the whole town with destruction, and the assault was ordered for the next morning; but when the troops assembled, the burning houses appeared so formidable that the attack was deferred. The batteries then played again, partly on the second breach, partly on the defences, partly to break the wall in a third place between the half bastion of St. John on the land front and the main breach.

During the night the vigilant governor mounted two field-pieces on the cavalier in the centre of the land front, which being fifteen feet above the other defences commanded the high curtain; and he still had on the horn-work a light piece, and two casemated guns on the flank of the cavalier. Two other field-pieces were mounted on an entrenchment, which, crossing the ditch of the land front, bore on the approaches to the main breach, and a twenty-four pounder looked from the tower of Las Mesquitas between the main breach and where the third opening was being made, flanking both; two four-pounders were in the tower of Hornos, two heavy guns were on the flank of St. Elmo, and two others placed on the right of the Mirador, could play upon the breaches within the fortified line of Monte Orgullo.* Thus fourteen pieces were still available for defence, the retaining sea-wall, or *fausse braye*, which strengthened the Urumea flank of the horn-work and between which and the river the storming parties must necessarily advance, was covered with live shells to roll over on the columns, and behind the flaming houses near the breach other edifices were loopholed and filled with musketeers. However, the fire, extending rapidly and fiercely, greatly injured the defences, the French withdrew their guns until the moment of attack, and as the British artillery officers declared they could in daylight silence the enemy's fire and keep the parapet clear of men, Graham renewed the order for

THE ASSAULT.

In the night of the 24th two thousand men of the fifth division filed into the trenches on the isthmus. This force was composed of the third battalion of the Royals under Major Frazer, destined to storm the great breach; the thirty-eighth regiment under Colonel Greville, designed to assail the lesser and most distant breach; the ninth regiment under Colonel Cameron, appointed to support the Royals. A detachment selected from the light companies of a.l

* Bellas.

those battalions was placed in the centre of the Royals, under the command of Lieutenant Campbell of the ninth regiment; he was accompanied by the Engineer Machel and a ladder party, and was to sweep the high curtain after the breach should be won.

From the trenches to the points of attack was more than three hundred yards along the contracted space between the retaining wall of the horn-work and the river—the ground was strewn with rocks covered by slippery sea-weeds—the tide had left large and deep pools of water—the parapet of the horn-work was entire as well as the retaining wall—the parapets of the other works and the two towers, which closely flanked the breach, although injured were far from being ruined, and every place was thickly garnished with musketeers. The difficulties of the attack were obvious, and some Portuguese, placed in a trench beyond the parallel on the isthmus and within sixty yards of the ramparts, were ordered to quell if possible the fire of the horn-work.

While it was still dark the storming columns moved out of the trenches, and the globe of compression in the drain was exploded with great effect against the counterscarp and glacis of the horn-work. The garrison, astonished by this unlooked-for event, abandoned the flanking parapet, and the allies rushed onwards, the stormers for the main breach leading and suffering more from the fire of the batteries on the right of the Urumea than from the enemy. Major Frazer and the Engineer Harry Jones first reached the breach; and as the enemy had fallen back in confusion behind the ruins of the burning houses, those brave officers rushed up expecting that their troops would follow—but not many followed, for it was extremely dark, and the natural difficulties of the way had contracted the front and disordered the column in its whole length; the soldiers, straggling and out of wind, arrived in small disconnected parties at the foot of the breach. The foremost gathered near their gallant leaders, yet the depth of the descent into the town and the volumes of flames and smoke which still issued from the burning houses behind awed the stoutest, and more than two-thirds of the column, irritated by the destructive flank fire, had broken off at the demi-bastion to commence a musketry battle with the enemy on the rampart.

Meanwhile the shells from the Monte Orgullo fell rapidly, the French rallied, and with a smashing musketry from the ruins and loopholed houses smote the head of the stormers, while the men in the towers smote them on the flanks; and from every quarter came showers of grape and hand-grenades tearing the ranks in a dreadful manner. Frazer was killed on the flaming ruins, the intrepid Jones stood there awhile longer amidst a few heroic

soldiers hoping for aid, but none came, and he and those with him were struck down; the Engineer Machel was killed early, and the men bearing ladders fell or were dispersed. Thus the rear of the column had got into confusion before the head was beaten, and it was in vain Greville of the thirty-eighth, Cameron of the ninth, Captain Archimbeau of the Royals, and many other regimental officers attempted to rally their discomfited troops and refill the breach; it was in vain that Lieutenant Campbell, breaking through the tumultuous crowd with the survivors of his chosen detachment, mounted the ruins—twice he ascended, twice he was wounded, and all around him died. The Royals endeavoring to retire, got intermixed with the thirty-eighth and with some of the ninth who had unsuccessfully endeavored to pass them and get to the lesser breach. Then swayed by different impulses, pent up in the narrow way between the horn-work and the river, the mass reeling to and fro could neither advance nor go back until the shells and musketry, constantly plied both in front and flank, had thinned the concourse, and the trenches were regained in confusion. At daylight a truce was agreed to for an hour, during which the French, who had already removed the gallant Jones and some of the wounded men from the breach, now carried off the more distant sufferers lest they should be drowned by the rising of the tide; but during the contest some grenadiers, rushing out on the breach, with an infamous barbarity stabbed several wounded soldiers lying there.*

Five officers of engineers, including Sir Richard Fletcher, and forty-four officers of the line with five hundred and twenty men, had been killed, wounded or made prisoners in this assault, the failure of which was signal, yet the causes were obvious and may be classed thus.

1. Deviation from the original project of siege and from Wellington's instructions.
2. Bad arrangements of detail.
3. Want of vigor in the execution.

Wellington having visited the Chofre trenches on the 22d had confirmed his first approval of Smith's plan, and gave that officer final directions for the attack finishing thus, "*fair daylight must be taken for the assault.*" These instructions and their emphatic termination were repeated by Smith in the proper quarter, and were not followed; no lodgment was made on the horn-work, the defences were nearly entire both in front and flank, and the assault was given in darkness. Smith had ascertained by calculation and consultations with the fishermen, that the ebb of tide would serve exactly at daybreak on the 24th; yet the assault was only made the

* Narrative of his captivity by Colonel Harry Jones.

25th, and before daylight, when the high water, contracting the ground, increased the obstacles and forced the assaulting column to march on a narrow front and a long line, making an uneasy progress and trickling onwards instead of dashing with a broad surge against the breach. The rules of art being thus neglected and no extraordinary resource substituted, the operation failed.

The troops filed out of the long narrow trenches in the night, a tedious operation, and were immediately exposed to a fire of grape from their own batteries on the Chofres:* this fire should have ceased when the globe of compression was sprung; but what with darkness and noise it was neither seen nor heard; and though the explosion drove the enemy from the horn-work and the Portuguese advanced to the ditch, when a vigorous escalade would probably have succeeded, they had no ladders. The stormers of the great breach marched first, filling up the way and rendering the second breach, as Smith had foretold, useless, and the ladder-bearers never got to their destination. In fine the assault was ill-digested.

There was also a neglect of moral influence followed by its natural consequence, want of vigor in execution. Deferring the assault from the 24th to the 25th, expressly because the breach was too difficult, rendered the troops uneasy; they suspected hidden danger, and in this mood emerging from the trenches were struck by the fire of their own batteries; then wading through deep pools of water, or staggering in the dark over slippery rocks and close under the enemy's flanking works whence every shot told with fatal effect, how could they manifest their natural conquering energy? A second and more vigorous assault on the great breach might have been effected by a recognized leader; but no general or staff officer went out of the trenches, and the isolated exertions of regimental officers failed. Nor were there wanting other sinister influences. Oswald had in council earnestly and justly urged the dangers arising from the irregular mode of attack; but this anticipation of ill success, in which other officers of rank joined, was also freely expressed out of council, and it is said even in the hearing of the troops, abating that daring confidence which victory loves.

Wellington repaired immediately to St. Sebastian. The causes of failure were apparent and he would have renewed the attack, but was compelled from want of ammunition to defer it, until powder and additional ordnance, for which he had written to England as early as the 26th of June, should arrive. Next day other events caused him to resort to a blockade, and the battering train was transported to Passages, two guns and two howitzers

* Sir C. Smith, MSS.

only being retained on the Chofres and Monte Olio. This operation was completed in the night of the 26th, but at daybreak the garrison made a sally from the horn-work, surprised the trenches and swept off two hundred Portuguese and thirty British soldiers. To avoid a repetition of this disaster the guards of the trenches were concentrated in the left parallel, and patrols only were sent out, yet one of those also was cut off on the first of August. Thus terminated the first part of the siege of San Sebastian in which the allies lost thirteen hundred soldiers and seamen, exclusive of Spaniards during Mendizabel's blockade.

CHAPTER IV.

Soult appointed the Emperor's lieutenant—Arrives at Bayonne—Joseph goes to Paris—Sketch of Napoleon's political and military situation—His greatness of mind—Soult's activity—Theatre of operations described—Soult resolves to succor Pampeluna—Relative positions and numbers of the contending armies described.

TEN days after the battle of Vittoria, Marshal Soult, under a decree issued from Dresden, succeeded the King as lieutenant to Napoleon, who thus showed how little he had been biassed by Joseph's accusations. Travelling with surprising expedition, he was enabled on the 12th of July to assume the command of the three beaten armies, now re-organized in one under the title of the "*army of Spain*;" and he had secret orders to put Joseph forcibly aside if necessary, but that monarch willingly retired. At this period General Paris was still at Jaca, but Clausel had entered France, and Soult, reinforced from the interior, had nine divisions of infantry, a reserve, and two divisions of cavalry, besides light horsemen attached to the infantry.* Including garrisons, and twelve Italian and Spanish battalions not included in the organization, he had one hundred and fourteen thousand men; and, as the armies of Aragon and Catalonia had above sixty-six thousand, one hundred and eighty thousand men and twenty-six thousand horses were still menacing Spain. One hundred and fifty-six thousand were present under arms: and in Germany and Poland seven hundred thousand French troops were employed!

Such masses directed by Napoleon seemed sufficient to defy the world; but moral power, defined by himself as three-fourths of military strength; that power which puny essayists, declaiming

* Appendix 20, § 3.

for their hour against the genius of warriors, are unable to comprehend although the most important part of the art they decry, was wanting. One-half of this force, organized in peace and setting forth in hope at the beginning of a war, would have enabled Napoleon to conquer; now, near the close of a terrible struggle, with a declining fate and the national confidence shaken, although his genius was never more surpassingly displayed, his military power was a vast but unsound machine. The public mind was bewildered by combinations the full scope of which he alone could see clearly; generals and ministers doubted and feared when they should have supported him, neglecting their duty or coldly executing when their zeal should have redoubled. The unity of impulse so essential to success was thus lost, and the numerous armies carried not with them proportionate strength. To have struggled with hope under such astounding difficulties was scarcely to be expected from the greatest minds. But like the Emperor to calculate and combine the most stupendous efforts with calmness and accuracy; to seize every favorable chance with unerring rapidity; to sustain every reverse with undisturbed constancy; never urged to rashness by despair yet enterprising to the utmost verge of daring consistent with reason, was a display of intellectual greatness so surpassing, that it is not without justice Napoleon has been called, in reference as well to past ages as to the present, the foremost of mankind.

Sudden and wide was the destruction caused by the snows of Russia; it shattered the emperor's military and political system, and the fragments of the former were useless until he could again bind them together. To effect that he rushed with a raw army into the midst of Germany; for his hope was to obtain by celerity a rallying point for those veterans, who, having survived the Russian winter and the succeeding pestilence, were dispersed all over the continent. His first effort was successful, but without good cavalry victory cannot be pushed far, and the practiced horsemen of France had nearly disappeared: their successors, badly mounted and less skilful, were too few and too weak, and thus extraordinary exertion was required from soldiers whose youth and inexperience rendered them unfit for the ordinary hardships of war. The measure of Wellington's campaign is thus attained; for if Joseph had opposed him with only moderate ability, and avoided a great battle, not less than fifty thousand veterans could have reinforced the young soldiers in Germany. On the side of Spain those veterans were still numerous; but the military spirit of the French people, previously almost worn out by victory was now abashed by defeat; and even the generals who had acquired grandeur and riches beyond their

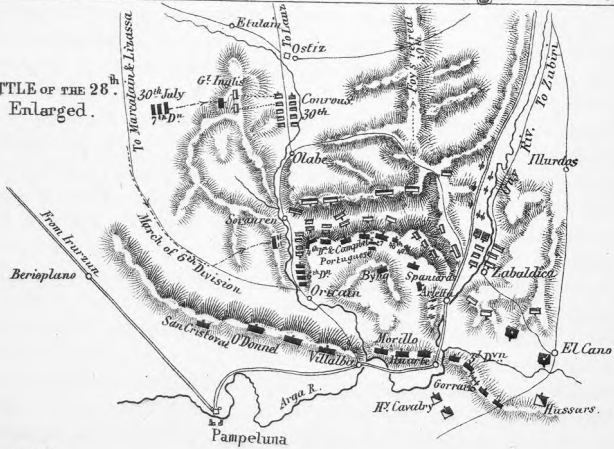
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Souls operations to relieve
PAMPELUNA
July 1813.



BATTLE OF THE 28th
Enlarged.



hopes, were with few exceptions averse to farther toil. Napoleon's astonishing firmness of mind was understood by few in high stations, shared by fewer; and many were the traitors to him and to France, and to the glories of both. However, his power was still enormous, and wherever he led in person, his brave and faithful soldiers, fighting with the true instinct of patriotism, conquered. Where he was not their iron hardihood abated.

Soult was one of the few whose indefatigable energy rendered them worthy lieutenants of the emperor; and with singular zeal and ability he now served. His troops, nominally above one hundred thousand men, ninety-seven thousand being present under arms with eighty-six pieces of artillery, were not all available for field operations. Pampeluna, San Sebastian, Santona, Bayonne, and the foreign battalions had seventeen thousand men; but most of those battalions had orders to regain their own countries with a view to form the new levies. The permanent "*army of Spain*" furnished therefore only seventy-seven thousand five hundred men present under arms, seven thousand of which were cavalry. Its condition was not satisfactory. The people on the frontier were flying from the allies, the military administration was disorganized, the recent disasters had discouraged the soldiers and deteriorated their discipline. Soult was therefore desirous of some delay to secure his base and restore order ere he attempted to regain the offensive, but his instructions on that point were imperatively adverse.

Napoleon's system was perfectly adapted for great efforts, civil or military; yet so rapid had been Wellington's advance, so decided his operations, that the resources of France were in a certain degree paralyzed, and the army still reeled and rocked from the blows it had received. Bayonne, a fortress of no great strength in itself, had been quite neglected, it was now being armed and provisioned; and the restoration of an entrenched camp, originally traced by Vauban to cover Bayonne, followed. Then the enforcement of discipline, the removal of the immense train of Spanish families, civil administrators and other wasteful followers of Joseph's court, the arrangement of a general system for supply of money and provisions, aided by judicious efforts to stimulate the civil authorities and excite the national spirit, indicated that a great commander was in the field. The soldiers' confidence soon revived, and some leading merchants of Bayonne zealously seconded the general; but the people of the south were more inclined to avoid the burthen of defending their country than to answer appeals to their patriotism.

On the 14th Soult examined the line of military positions, and

ordered Reille, then occupying the passes of Vera and Echallar, to prepare pontoons for throwing two bridges over the Bidassoa at Biriattou. That general, as we have seen, was driven from those passes the next day, yet he prepared his bridges; and such was Soult's activity that on the 16th all the combinations for a gigantic offensive movement were digested, the means of executing it rapidly advancing, and orders were issued for the preliminary dispositions.

The army was divided into three corps of battle and a reserve. Clausel had the left wing at St. Jean Pied de Port, and was in communication by the French frontier with Paris at Jaca.* Drouet, Count D'Erlon, occupied with the centre the heights near Espelette and Ainhoa, having an advanced guard near Urdax. Reille was in position with the right on the mountains overlooking Vera from the side of France. The reserve under Villatte, comprising a separate body of light horsemen and the foreign battalions, guarded the banks of the Bidassoa from the mouth upwards to Irun, at which place the stone bridge was destroyed. The two divisions of cavalry under Trielhard and Pierre Soult were on the banks of the Nive and the Adour.

Wellington's counter-dispositions were as follows:

Byng's brigade of British infantry, detached from the second division and reinforced by Morillo's Spaniards, was on the extreme right. These troops had early in June driven the French from the village of Valcarlos in the valley of that name, and had foraged the French territory; but, finding no good permanent position, retreated again to the rocks in front of the passes of Roncesvalles and Ibañeta.

On the left of Byng, Campbell's brigade, detached from Hamilton's Portuguese division, was posted in the Alduides and supported with the fourth division by Cole, who was at Viscayret in the valley of Urroz.

On the left of Campbell, Hill defended the Bastan with the remainder of the second division and Hamilton's Portuguese now commanded by Silveira. Picton, with the third division, was stationed at Olague as a reserve to those troops and to Cole.

On the left of Hill the seventh and light divisions occupied a chain of mountains running by Echallar to Vera, and behind them at the town of San Estevan, was posted the sixth division.

Longa's Spaniards continued the line of defence from Vera to

* Soult, MSS.

Giron's position, which extended along the mountains bordering the Bidassoa to the sea, crossing the great road of Irun

Behind Giron was the besieging army under Graham, with thirty-six pieces of field artillery; some regiments of British and Portuguese cavalry were with the right wing and centre; but the main body of cavalry and the heavy guns were behind the mountains, chiefly about Tafalla. The great hospitals were in Vittoria, the commissariat dépôts on the coast, and to supply the troops in the mountains was exceedingly difficult and onerous.

O'Donnel blockaded Pampeluna with the Andalusian army of reserve, and Carlos d'España's division was on the march to join him. Mina, Julian Sanchez, Duran, Empecinado, Goyan, and some smaller bands, were on the side of Zaragoza and Daroca, cutting the communication between Soult and Suchet, and the latter as we have seen, was falling back upon Catalonia.

Wellington's army in Navarre and Guipuscoa, was above one hundred thousand men, of which the Anglo-Portuguese furnished fifty-seven thousand present under arms, seven thousand being cavalry;* but the Spanish regulars under Giron, O'Donnel, and Carlos d'España, including Longa's and Mendizabel's men, scarcely amounted to twenty-five thousand.† According to the respective muster-rolls, the troops in line actually under arms and facing each other were, of the allies eighty-two thousand, of the French seventy-eight thousand; but as the rolls of the latter include every man and officer of all arms belonging to the organization, and the British and Portuguese rolls so quoted would furnish between ten and twelve thousand additional combatants, the French force must be reduced, or the allies augmented in that proportion. This surplus was however compensated by the foreign battalions temporarily attached to Soult's army, and by the numerous national guards, fierce warlike mountaineers to fight and very useful as guides. In other respects Wellington stood at a disadvantage.

His theatre of operations was a trapezoid, with sides from forty to sixty miles in length, and having Bayonne, St. Jean Pied de Port, St. Sebastian and Pampeluna, all fortresses in possession of the French, at the angles. The interior, broken and tormented by savage mountains, narrow craggy passes, deep water-courses, precipices and forests, appeared a wilderness which no military combinations could embrace, and susceptible only of irregular and partisan operations. But the great spinal ridge of the Pyrenees furnished a clue to the labyrinth. Running diagonally across the quadrilateral, it separated Bayonne, St. Jean Pied de Port, and San Sebastian from Pampeluna; thus the portion of the allied

* Appendix 31.

† Duke of Wellington, MSS.

army which more especially belonged to the blockade of Pampeluna was in a manner cut off from that which belonged to the siege of San Sebastian. They were distinct armies, each having its particular object, and the only direct communication between them was the great road running behind the mountains from Tolosa and Irurzun to Pampeluna. The centre of the allies was indeed an army of succor and connection; but of necessity very much scattered, and with lateral communications so few, difficult, and indirect as to prevent any unity of movement; nor could Hill move at all until an attack was decidedly pronounced against one of the extremities, lest the most direct gun-road to Pampeluna, which he covered, should be unwarily opened to the enemy. The French general, taking the offensive, could therefore by beaten roads concentrate against any part of the English general's line, which, necessarily a passively defensive one, followed an irregular trace of more than fifty miles of mountains.

Wellington having his battering-train and stores about San Sebastian, which was also nearer and more accessible to the enemy than Pampeluna, made his army lean towards that side. His left wing, including the army of siege, was twenty-one thousand, with singularly strong positions of defence; his centre, twenty-four thousand, could in two marches unite with the left wing to cover the siege or fall upon the flanks of an enemy advancing by the high road of Irun; but three days or more were required by those troops to concentrate for the security of the blockade on the right. Soult, however, judged that no decisive result would attend a direct movement upon San Sebastian, because Guipuscoa was exhausted of provisions; and the centre of the allies could fall on his flank before he reached Ernani, which, his attack in front failing, would place him in a dangerous position. Moreover, by means of his sea communication he knew San Sebastian was not in extremity; but he had no communication with Pampeluna and feared its fall. Wherefore he resolved to operate by his left.

Profiting by the French roads leading to St. Jean Pied de Port, covering his movement by the Nivelle and Nive rivers and by the positions of his centre, he hoped to gather on Wellington's right quicker than that general could gather to oppose him; and thus compensating by numbers the disadvantage of assailing mountain positions, force a way to Pampeluna. That fortress once succored, he designed to seize the road of Irurzun, to fall upon the separated divisions of the centre as they descended from the hills, or operate on the rear of the force besieging San Sebastian, while a corps of observation, which he proposed to leave on

the lower Bidassoa, menaced it in front and followed it in retreat. The siege of San Sebastian, the blockade of Pampeluna, and probably that of Santona would be thus raised; the French army, united in an abundant country and its communication with Suchet secured, would be free either to co-operate with that marshal or to press its own attack.

In this view and to mislead Wellington by vexing his right simultaneously with the construction of the bridges against his left, Soult wrote to Paris, desiring him to march when time suited, from Jaca by the higher valleys towards Aviz or Sanguessa, to drive the partisans from that side, and join the left of the army when it should have reached Pampeluna. Clausel was directed to repair the roads in his own front, and push the heads of his columns towards the passes of Roncevalles; then to send a strong detachment into the Val de Baygorry, near the lateral pass of Yspegui, to menace Hill's flank which was at that pass, and the front of Campbell's brigade in the Alduides.

On the 20th Reille's troops on the heights above Vera and Sarre, being cautiously relieved by Villatte, marched through Cambo towards St. Jean Pied de Port. They were to reach the latter early on the 22d, and on that day also the two divisions of cavalry and the parc of artillery were to be concentrated at the same place. D'Erlon with the centre was still to hold his positions at Espelette, Ainhoë or Ainhoa and Urdax, thus covering and masking the great movements taking place behind. Villatte who, including the foreign battalions, had fifteen thousand sabres and bayonets, remained in observation on the Bidassoa. If threatened by superior forces he was to retire slowly and in mass upon the entrenched camp commenced at Bayonne; halting in succession on the positions of Bordegain in front of St. Jean de Luz, and on the heights of Bidart in rear of that town. He was especially directed to show only French troops at the advanced posts, and if the assailants made a point with a small corps to drive them vigorously over the Bidassoa again. But if the allies should in consequence of Soult's operations against their right retire, Villatte was to relieve San Sebastian and follow them briskly by Tolosa.

Rapidity was of vital importance to the French, but heavy and continued rains swelled the streams and ruined the roads in the deep country between Bayonne and the hills; the head-quarters, which should have arrived at St. Jean Pied de Port on the 20th, only reached Olhonce, a few miles short of that place, the 21st; and Reille's troops unable to make way at all by Cambo, took the longer road of Bayonne.* The cavalry was retarded in like man-

* Soult, MSS.

ner, and the whole army, men and horses, were worn down by the severity of the marches. Two days were thus lost, but on the 24th more than sixty thousand fighting men, including cavalry, national guards and gens-d'armes, with sixty-six pieces of artillery, were assembled to force the passes of Roncevalles and Maya. The main road leading to the former was repaired, three hundred sets of bullocks were provided to draw the guns up the mountain, and the national guards of the frontier were ordered to assemble in the night on the heights of Yropil; where they were to be reinforced the morning of the 25th by regular troops, being to vex and turn the right of the allies, which extended to the foundry of Orbaiceta. Such were Soult's first dispositions, but as mountain warfare is complicated, the objects of the hostile forces and the nature of the country must be shown.

It has been said the great spine of the hills runs diagonally across the theatre of operations. From this spine huge ridges shot out on either hand, and the communications between the valleys thus formed on both sides of the main chain passed over certain comparatively low places, called "*cols*" by the French and *puertos* by the Spaniards. The Bastan, Val Carlos, and Val de Baygorry the upper part of which is divided into the Alduides and the Val de Ayra, were on the French side of the great chain: on the Spanish side were the valleys of Ahescoa or Orbaiceta, the valley of Iscua or Roncevalles, the valley of Urros, the Val de Zubiri, and the valley of Lanz, the two latter leading down directly upon Pampeluna, which stands within two miles of the junction of their waters. The disposition and force of the armies shall now be traced from left to right of the French, and from right to left of the allies. But first it must be observed, that the main chain, throwing as it were a shoulder forward from Roncevalles towards St. Jean Pied de Port, placed the entrance to the Spanish valley of Ahescoa or Orbaiceta in the power of Soult; who could thus by Yropil turn the extreme right of his adversary with detachments, although not with an army.

Val Carlos.—Two issues led from this valley over the main chain, namely the Ibañeta and Mendichuri passes, and there was also the lateral pass of Atalosti leading into the Alduides; all comprised within a space of two or three miles. The high road from St. Jean Pied de Port to Pampeluna, having ascended by the left-hand ridge of Val Carlos, runs along the crest until it reaches the superior ridge; and then along the summit of that also until it reaches the pass of Ibañeta, whence it descends to Roncevalles. Ibañeta may therefore be called the Spanish end of the pass; but it is also a pass in itself, because a narrow road, leading through Arnegui and the village of Val Carlos, there joins the main road.

Clausel's three divisions of infantry, all the artillery, and the cavalry, were formed in two columns in front of St. Jean Pied de Port. The head of one was placed on some heights above Arnegui, two miles from the village of Val Carlos; the head of the other at the Venta de Orrisson on the main road, two miles from the remarkable rocks of Chateau Piñon; near which one narrow way descends on the right to the village of Val Carlos, another on the left to the foundry of Orbaiceta.

On the right-hand ridge of Val Carlos, near the rock of Ayrola, Reille's divisions were concentrated with orders to ascend at daylight and march by the ridge towards a culminant point of the great chain called the Lindouz, then to push detachments through Ibañeta and Mendichuri to the villages of Roncesvalles and Espinal. He was also to seize the passes of Sahorgain and Urtiaga on his right, and approach the distant passes of Renecabal and Bellate; thus closing the issues from the Alduides and menacing those from the Bastan.

Val de Ayra. The Alduides. Val de Baygorry.—The ridge of Ayrola, at the foot of which Reille's troops were posted, separates Val Carlos from the valleys named above, which were designated as the Alduides in the upper part, Val de Baygorry in the lower. The issues from the Alduides over the great chain towards Spain were the passes of Sahorgain and Urtiaga; and there was also a road running from the village of Alduides through the Atalosti pass to Ibañeta, a distance of eight miles, by which Campbell's brigade communicated with and could join Byng and Morillo.

Bastan.—This district, including the valley of Lerins and the Cinco Villas, is separated from the Val de Baygorry by the mountain of La Houssa, on which the national guards of Val de Baygorry and the Alduides were to assemble on the night of the 24th and light fires, to make it appear a great body was menacing the Bastan by that flank. The Bastan however does not belong to the same geographical system as the other valleys. Instead of opening to the French territory it is entirely enclosed with mountains; and while the waters of the Val Carlos, the Alduides, and Val de Baygorry run off northward by the Nive, those of the Bastan run off westward by the Bidassoa; the streams being separated by the Mandale, Commissari, La Rhune, Santa Barbara, Ivantelly, Atchiola and other mountains.

With reference to the French army, the entrances to the Bastan were by the passes of Vera and Echallar on the right, the Col de Maya and Arietta passes in the centre; on the left the lateral passes of Yspégui, Lorrieta, and Berderez, leading from Val de Baygorry and the Alduides. The issues over the principal chain of the Py-

renees in the direct line from the Maya entrances, were the passes of Renecabal and Bellate; the first leading into the valley of Zubiri, the second into the valley of Lanz. There was also the pass of Artesiaga leading into the Val de Zubiri, but it was nearly impracticable; and all the roads through the Bastan were crossed by strong positions dangerous to assail.

Col de Maya comprised several passages in the space of four miles, all of which were menaced by D'Erlon from Espelete and Urdax; and he had twenty-one thousand men, furnishing eighteen thousand bayonets. His communications with Soult were maintained by cavalry posts through Val de Baygorry; and his orders were, to attack the allies when the combinations in Val Carlos and on the Houssa should cause them to abandon the passes at Maya; but he was especially directed to operate by his left, and secure the lateral passes, with a view to the concentration of the whole army. Thus if Hill retreated by Bellate, D'Erlon was to move by Berderez and the Alduides; if Hill retired upon San Estevan, D'Erlon was to move by Bellate. Such being the dispositions of the French general those of the allies shall now be traced.

Byng and Morillo guarded the passes in front of Roncevalles, with sixteen hundred British and three or four thousand Spaniards.* Byng's brigade and two Spanish battalions occupied the rocks of Altobiscar on the high road facing Chateau Piñon; one Spanish battalion was at the foundry of Orbaiceta on their right; Morillo with the remainder occupied the heights of Iroulepe, overlooking the nearest houses of the straggling village of Val Carlos.

These positions, four and five miles from the French columns at Venta de Orrisson and Arnegui, were insecure. They were indeed steep, but too extensive; moreover, although the passes behind them led into the Roncevalles, that valley did not lead direct to Pampeluna; the high road after descending a few miles turned to the right and crossed two ridges and the intervening valley of Urros before it entered the valley of Zubiri, down which it was conducted to Pampeluna: wherefore after passing Ibañeta in retreat, the allies could not avoid lending their flank to Reille's divisions as far as Viscayret in the valley of Urroz. It was partly to obviate this danger, partly to support O'Donnel while Clausel's force was in the vicinity of Jaca, that the fourth division, six thousand strong, occupied Viscayret; six miles from the pass of Ibañeta, ten miles from Morillo's position, and twelve miles from Byng's position. But when Clausel retired to France, Cole was to observe the roads over the main chain from the Alduides, and form a rallying point and reserve for Campbell, Byng, and

* Plan 10, page 346.

Morillo ; his instructions being to maintain the Roncevalles passes against a front attack, but to avoid a desperate battle if the flanks were insecure.

On the left of Byng and Morillo, Campbell's Portuguese, two thousand, were encamped above the village of Alduides on a mountain called Mizpira. They watched the national guards of Val de Baygorry, preserved the communication between Byng and Hill, and in some measure covered the right flank of the latter. From the Alduides Campbell could retreat through the pass of Sahorgain upon Viscayret in the valley of Urroz, and through the passes of Urtiaga and Renacabal upon Eugui in the Val de Zubiri ; finally by the lateral pass of Atalosti he could join Byng and the fourth division. The communication between all these posts was maintained by Long's cavalry.

Continuing the line of positions to the left, Hill occupied the Bastan with the second British divisions, Silveira's Portuguese and some squadrons of horse ; but Byng's and Campbell's brigades being detached, he had not more than nine thousand sabres and bayonets. His two British brigades under William Stewart guarded Col de Maya ; Silveira was at Erazu on the right of Stewart, watching the passes of Arrieta, Yspegui and Elliorita ; the two former being occupied by Brotherton's cavalry and the sixth caçadores. The direct line of retreat and point of concentration for all these troops was Elizondo.

From Elizondo the Pampeluna road over the great chain was by Bellate and the valley of Lanz. The latter running parallel with the valley of Zubiri is separated from it by a wooded and rugged ridge ; and between them there were but three communications—the one high up, leading from Lanz to Eugui, and prolonged from thence to Viscayret in the valley of Urroz—the other two lower down, leading from Ostiz and Olague to the village of Zubiri. At Olague the third division, four thousand three hundred bayonets under Picton, was ready to support Cole or Hill as occasion required.

Continuing the front line from the left of Stewart's position at the Col de Maya, the trace run along the mountains forming the French boundary of the Bastan. There the passes of Echallar and Vera were guarded by the seventh division under Lord Dalhousie ; and the light division under Charles Alten. The former, having four thousand seven hundred bayonets, communicated with Stewart by a narrow road over the Atchiola mountains ; and the eighty-second regiment was encamped at its junction with the Elizondo road, three miles behind the pass of Maya. The light division, four thousand, was at Vera, guarding roads which led

behind the mountains through Sumbilla and San Estevan to Elizondo. These two divisions being only watched by part of Villatte's reserve were available for the succor of either wing; and behind them, at the town of San Estevan, was the sixth division, six thousand bayonets, and now under Pack. This division, equally distant from Vera and Maya, having free communication with both and a direct line of march to Pampeluna over the main chain of the Pyrenees, by the *Puerto de Arriz*, sometimes called the pass of *Doña Maria*, was available for any object.

Around Pampeluna, the point to which all the lines of march converged, O'Donnel's Andalusians maintained the blockade, and being afterwards reinforced by Carlos d'España at a very critical moment numbered eleven thousand, of which seven thousand could act without abandoning the blockade.

Head-quarters were at Lesaca. The line of correspondence with the left wing was over the Peña de Haya; with the right wing by San Estavan, Elizondo and the Alduides; the line between Graham and Pampeluna was by Goizueta and the high road of Irurzun.

As the French were almost in contact with the allies' positions at Roncevalles, the point of defence nearest to Pampeluna, it followed, that on the rapidity or slowness with which Soult overcame resistance in that quarter depended his success; and a comparative estimate of numbers and distances will give the measure of his chances. Clausel had sixteen thousand bayonets, besides cavalry, artillery and national guards, the last menacing the valley of Orbaiceta. Byng and Morillo were therefore, with five thousand infantry to sustain the assault of sixteen thousand until Cole could reinforce them; but Cole, twelve miles off, could not come up under four or five hours. And as Reille's divisions, of equal strength with Clausel's, could before that time seize the Lindouz and turn the left, the allies must finally abandon their ground for a new field, where Picton could join them from Olague and Campbell from the Alduides. Then with seventeen or eighteen thousand bayonets and some guns they might oppose Clausel and Reille's thirty thousand. But Picton at Olague was more than a day's march from Byng at Altobiscar; their junction could only be effected in the Zubiri valley not far from Pampeluna; and they could only be reinforced there by seven thousand Spaniards from the blockade, and three thousand cavalry from the Ebro.

Hill, menaced by D'Erlon with a superior force, and having the pass of Maya, half a day's march further from Pampeluna than the passes of Roncevalles, to defend, could not give ready help. If he retreated rapidly D'Erlon could follow as rapidly and

though Picton and Cole would thus be reinforced with ten thousand men Soult would gain eighteen thousand; but Hill could not move until he knew that Byng and Cole were driven from the Roncevalles passes: in fine he could not avoid a dilemma. For if he held Col de Maya and affairs went wrong near Pampeluna his own situation would be imminently dangerous; if he held Irrueta, his next position, the same danger was to be dreaded; and Maya once abandoned, D'Erlon, moving by his own left towards the Alduides, could join Soult in the valley of Zubiri before Hill could join Cole and Picton by the valley of Lanz. But if Hill did not maintain the position of Irrueta, D'Erlon could follow and cut the sixth and seventh divisions off from the valley of Lanz. The extent and power of Soult's combinations are thus evinced. Hill, forced to await orders and hampered by D'Erlon, required, it might be three days to get into line near Pampeluna; but D'Erlon after gaining Maya could in one day and a half, by the passes of Berderez and Urtiaga, join Soult in the Val de Zubiri. Meanwhile Byng, Morillo, Cole, Campbell, and Picton would be exposed to the attack of double their own numbers; and however firm and able those generals might be, they could not, when thus suddenly brought together, be expected to seize the whole system of operations and act with that nicety of judgment which the occasion demanded. It was clear therefore that Hill must be in some measure paralyzed at first, and finally be thrown, together with the sixth, seventh, and light divisions, upon an external line of operations while the French moved upon internal lines.

On the other hand, Byng, Morillo, Campbell, Cole, Picton and Hill were only pieces of resistance on Wellington's board; the sixth, seventh, and light divisions were those with which he meant to win his game. There was however a great difference in their value. The light division and the seventh, especially the former, being furthest from Pampeluna, having enemies close in front and points to guard, were, the seventh a day, the light division two days behind the sixth division, which was free, and, the drag of D'Erlon's corps considered, a day nearer to Pampeluna than Hill. Upon the rapid handling of this well-placed body the fate of the allies therefore depended; if it arrived in time, thirty thousand infantry with sufficient cavalry and artillery would be established under the immediate command of Wellington, on a position of strength, checking the enemy until the rest of the army arrived. Where that position was and how the troops were gathered and there fought shall now be shown.

CHAPTER V.

BATTLES OF THE PYRENEES.

Soult attacks the right of the allies—Combat of Roncevalles—Combat of Linzoain—Count D'Erlon attacks the allies' right centre—Combat of Maya—General Hill takes a position at Irueta—Generals Picton and Cole retreat down the Val de Zubiri—They turn at Huarte and offer battle—Lord Wellington arrives—Combat of the 27th—First battle of Sauroren—Various movements—D'Erlon joins Soult, who attacks General Hill—Second battle of Sauroren—Foy is cut off from the main army—Night march of the light division—Soult retreats—Combat of Dona Maria—Dangerous position of the French at San Estevan—Soult marches down the Bidassoa—Forced march of the light division—Terrible scene near the bridge of Yanzi—Combats of Echallar and Ivantelly—Narrow escape of Lord Wellington—Observations.

Combat of Roncevalles.—On the 23d, Soult issued an order of the day remarkable for its force and frankness. Tracing with a rapid pen the leading events of the past campaign, he said the disasters had sprung from the incapacity of the king, not from the weakness of the soldiers, whose military virtue he justly extolled, inflaming their haughty courage by allusions to former glories. This address has been by writers, who disgrace English literature with unfounded aspersions of a courageous enemy, treated as unseemly boasting as to his intended operations; but the calumny is refuted by the following passage from his despatch to the minister at war. “*I shall move directly upon Pampeluna; if I succeed in relieving it I will operate towards my right, to embarrass the enemy's tooops in Guipuscoa, Biscay, and Alava; and to enable the reserve to join me, which will relieve St. Sebastian and Santona. If this should happen I will then consider what is to be done, either to push my own attack or to help the army of Aragon, but to look so far ahead would now be temerity.*” Here he puts every point hypothetically, and though conscious of superior abilities he did not suppress the sentiment of his own worth as a commander and was too proud to depreciate brave adversaries on the eve of battle. “*Let us not,*” he said, “*defraud the enemy of the praise which is due to him. The dispositions of the general have been prompt, skillful, and consecutive; the valor and steadiness of his troops have been praiseworthy.*” Having thus stimulated the ardor of his troops he put himself at the head of Clausel's divisions at daylight the 25th, and led them up against the rocks of Altobiscar.

Byng, warned the evening before that danger was near and jeal-