

*Combats of Echallar and Ivantelly.*—The light division held the road running from the bridge of Yanzi to Echallar until relieved by the fourth division, and then marched by Lesaca to Santa Barbara, thus turning Clausel's right. The fourth division marched from Sumbilla against his left; but Barnes's brigade, contrary to Wellington's intention, arrived unsupported before the fourth and light divisions were either seen or felt, and without awaiting the arrival of more troops, assailed Clausel's strong position. The fire became vehement, yet neither the steepness of the mountain nor the overshadowing multitude of the enemy, clustered above in support of their skirmishers, could arrest the assailants; and then was seen the astonishing spectacle of fifteen hundred men driving by sheer valor and force of arms six thousand good troops from a position, so rugged that there would have been little to boast of if the numbers had been reversed and the defence made good. The fourth division arrived indeed towards the end of the action, and the French, who had fulfilled their mission as a rear-guard, were worn with fatigue and ill-provided with ammunition, having exhausted all their reserve stores during the retreat: but their inferiority here belongs to the highest part of war. The British soldiers, their natural fierceness stimulated by the remarkable personal daring of their general, Barnes, were excited by success; the French were those who had failed in attack the 28th, had been utterly defeated the 30th, and had suffered so severely the day before about Sumbilla. Such then is the preponderance of moral power. The men who had assailed the terrible rocks above Sauroren with a force and energy that all the valor of the hardest British veterans scarcely sufficed to repel, were now, only five days afterwards, unable to sustain the shock of one-fourth of their own numbers. And at this very time, eighty British soldiers, the comrades and equals of those who achieved this wonderful exploit, being surprised while plundering, surrendered to some French peasants who, as Wellington truly observed, "*they would under other circumstances have eat up!*" What gross ignorance of human nature then do those declaimers display, who assert that the employing of brute force is the highest qualification of a general!

Clausel thus dispossessed, fell back fighting to a strong ridge beyond the pass of Echallar, having his right covered by the Ivantelly mountain which was strongly occupied. Meanwhile the light division, emerging by Lesaca from the narrow valley of the Bidasoa, ascended the broad heights of Santa Barbara and waited until the operations of the fourth and seventh divisions were far enough advanced to render it advisable to attack the Ivantelly. Lifting its

peaked head out of the Santa Barbara heights, it separated them from the ridges where Clausel was retreating, and as the evening came on, a thick mist capped the crowning rocks, which contained a strong French regiment; the British soldiers, still wearied with their long and terrible march the previous day, had been for two days without sustenance, and were leaning, weak and fainting, on their arms when the advancing fire of Barnes's action about Echallar indicated the necessity of dislodging the enemy from Ivan-telly. Andrew Barnard instantly led five companies of his riflemen to the attack, and four companies of the forty-third followed in support. The misty cloud had descended, and the riflemen were soon lost to view, but the sharp clang of their weapons, heard in distinct reply to the more sonorous rolling musketry of the French told what work was going on. For some time the echoes rendered it doubtful how the action went, but the following companies of the forty-third could find no trace of an enemy save the killed and wounded: Barnard had fought his way unaided and without a check to the summit. His dark-clothed, swarthy veterans raised their victorious shout from the highest peak, just as the coming night showed the long ridges of the mountains beyond, sparkling with the last musket-flashes from Clausel's troops then retiring in disorder from Echallar.

This day's fighting cost the British four hundred men, and Wellington narrowly escaped the enemy's hands. He had carried with him towards Echallar half a company of the forty-third as an escort, and placed a serjeant named Blood, with a party to watch in front while he examined his maps. The French being close at hand sent a detachment to cut the party off; and such was the nature of the ground that their troops rushing on at speed, would infallibly have fallen upon Wellington, if Blood, a young intelligent man, seeing the danger, had not with surprising activity, leaping rather than running down the precipitous rocks, given him notice: yet the French arrived in time to send a volley of shot after him as he galloped away.

Soult now made D'Erlon occupy the hills about Ainhoa; Clausel those in advance of Sarre, and he sent Reille with two divisions to St. Jean de Luz, behind Villatte's reserve. Foy, who had after his retreat rashly uncovered St. Jean Pied de Port, by descending upon Cambo, was ordered to return and augment his troops with all that he could collect of national guards and detachments.

Wellington had on the 1st directed Graham to move up with pontoons and cross the Bidassoa, but now abandone<sup>1</sup> this design; the two armies therefore rested quiet in their respective positions, after nine days of continual movement during which they had

fought ten serious actions. Of the allies, including the Spaniards, seven thousand three hundred officers and soldiers had been killed, wounded or taken, and many were dispersed from fatigue or to plunder. On the French side the loss was terrible, and their disorder rendered the official returns inaccurate. Wellington at first called it twelve thousand, but hearing that the French officers admitted more he raised his estimate to fifteen thousand. The engineer, *Belmas*, in his *Journals of Sieges*, compiled from official documents by order of the French government, sets down above thirteen thousand. Soult in his despatches at the time, stated fifteen hundred as the loss at Maya, four hundred at Roncevalles, two hundred on the 27th, and eighteen hundred on the 28th, after which he speaks no more of losses by battle. There remains therefore to be added the killed and wounded at the combats of Linzoain on the 26th, the double battles of Sauroren and Buenza on the 30th, the combats of the 31st, and those of the 1st and 2d of August; finally, four thousand unwounded prisoners. Let this suffice. It is not needful to sound the stream of blood in all its horrid depths.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. The allies' line of defence was weak. Was it therefore injudiciously adopted? Beatén at Vittoria the French were disorganized, and retreated without artillery or baggage on eccentric lines; Foy by Guipuscoa, Clausel by Zaragoza, Rielle by San Estevan, Joseph by Pampeluna. There was no reserve to rally upon, the people fled from the frontier. Bayonne and St. Jean Pied de Port, if not defenceless, were certainly in a very neglected state, and the English general might have undertaken any operation, assumed any position, offensive or defensive, which seemed good to him. Why then did he not establish the Anglo-Portuguese beyond the mountains, leaving the Spaniards to blockade the fortresses behind him? The answer to this question involves the difference between the practice and the theory of war.\*

*"The soldiers, instead of preparing food and resting themselves after the battle, dispersed in the night to plunder; and were so fatigued that when the rain came on the next day they were incapable of marching, and had more stragglers than the beaten enemy. Eighteen days after the victory twelve thousand five hundred men, chiefly British, were absent, most of them marauding in the mountains."*

Such were the reasons assigned by the English general for his slack pursuit after the battle of Vittoria; yet he had commanded that army for six years! Was he then deficient in the first qualifica-

\* Wellington's Despatches.

tion of a general, the art of disciplining and inspiring troops ; or was the English military system defective ? It is certain he always exacted the confidence of his soldiers as a leader ; it is not so certain he gained their affections. The barbarity of the English military code excited public horror, the inequality of promotion created public discontent ; yet the general complained he had no adequate power to reward or punish ; and he condemned alike the system and the soldiers it produced. The latter "*were detestable for everything but fighting, and the officers as culpable as the men.*" The vehemence of these censures is inconsistent with his celebrated observation, subsequently made, namely, "that he thought he could go anywhere and do anything with the army that fought on the Pyrenees ; and although it cannot be denied that his complaints were generally too well founded, there were thousands of true and noble soldiers, and zealous worthy officers who served their country honestly and merited no reproaches. It is enough that they have been since neglected, exactly in proportion to their want of that corrupt aristocratic influence which produced the evils complained of.

2. When the misconduct of the troops had thus weakened the effect of victory, the question of following Joseph at once into France assumed a new aspect. Wellington's system of warfare had never varied after the battle of Talavera. Rejecting dangerous enterprise, it rested on profound calculation both as to time and resources for accomplishing the gradual liberation of Spain by the Anglo-Portuguese army. Not that he held it impossible to attain that object suddenly—and his battles in India, the passage of the Douro, the advance to Talavera, prove that by nature he was inclined to daring operations,—but such efforts, however glorious, could not be adopted by a commander who feared even the loss of a brigade lest the government he served should put an end to the war. Neither was it suitable to the state of his relations with the Portuguese and Spaniards ; their ignorance, jealousy, and passionate pride, fierce in proportion to their weakness and improvidence, would have enhanced every danger.

3. No man could have anticipated the extraordinary errors of the French in 1813. Wellington did not expect to cross the Ebro before the end of the campaign, and his battering-train was prepared for the siege of Burgos, not for that of Bayonne. A sudden invasion of France, her military reputation considered, was therefore beyond the pale of his methodized system of warfare, which was founded upon political as well as military considerations ; and of the most complicated nature, seeing that he had at all times to deal with the personal and factious interests and passions, as well as the

great state interests of three nations, two of which abhorred each other. At this moment also the uncertain state of affairs in Germany strongly influenced his views. An armistice which might end in a separate peace excluding England would have brought Napoleon's whole force to the Pyrenees, and Wellington held the military and political proceeding of the coalesced powers cheap. "*I would not move a corporal's guard in reliance upon such a system,*" was the significant phrase he employed to express his contempt.

These considerations justified his caution as to invading France; but there were local military reasons equally cogent. 1. He could not dispense with a secure harbor, because the fortresses still in possession of the French, namely, Santona, Pancorbo, Pampeluna, and St. Sebastian, interrupted his communications with the interior of Spain. 2. He had to guard against the union of Suchet and Clausel on his right flank—hence his efforts to cut off the last-named general—hence also the blockade of Pampeluna in preference to siege, and the launching of Mina and the bands on the side of Zaragoza.

4. After Vittoria the nature of the campaign depended upon Suchet's operations, which were rendered more important by Murray's misconduct. The allied force on the eastern coast was badly organized; it did not advance from Valencia as we have seen until the 16th, and then only partially and by the coast; whereas Suchet had assembled more than twenty thousand excellent troops on the Ebro as early as the 12th of July. He might have saved the castle of Zaragoza with its great stores, and then rallying Paris' division, he could have menaced Wellington's flank with twenty-five thousand men exclusive of Clausel's force, and, if that general joined him, with forty thousand. On the 16th, the day Lord William Bentinck quitted Valencia, Suchet might have marched from Zaragoza on Tudela or Sanguessa; and Soult's preparations, originally made to attack on the 23d, instead of the 25th, would have naturally been hastened. How difficult it would then have been for the allies to maintain themselves beyond the Ebro is evident; much more so to hold a forward position in France. That Wellington feared an operation of this nature is shown by his instructions to Lord William Bentinck and to Mina; and by his keeping Picton and Cole behind the mountains, solely to watch Clausel until he regained France, when Cole was permitted to join Byng and Morillo. It follows that the operations after the battle of Vittoria were well considered, and consonant to the general system; their excellence would have been proved if Suchet had seized the advantages within his reach.

5. A general's capacity is sometimes more taxed to profit from a victory than to gain one. Wellington, master of all Spain, Catalonia excepted, desired to establish himself solidly in the Pyrenees, lest a separate peace in Germany should enable Napoleon to turn his whole force against the allies. In this expectation, with astonishing exertion of body and mind, he had in three days achieved a rigorous examination of the whole mass of the Western Pyrenees, and concluded, if Pampeluna and San Sebastian fell, that a defensive position, strong as that of Portugal, much stronger than could be found behind the Ebro, might be established. But to invest those places and maintain so difficult a covering line was a greater task than to win the battle of Vittoria. However, the early fall of San Sebastian he expected, because the errors of execution in that siege could not be foreseen; and he counted also on the disorganized state of the French army, on Joseph's want of military capacity, and the moral ascendancy which his own troops had acquired. He could not anticipate the expeditious journey, the sudden arrival of Soult, whose rapid re-organization of the French army and vigorous operations, contrasted with Joseph's abandonment of Spain, illustrated the old Greek saying, that a herd of deer led by a lion are more dangerous than a herd of lions led by a deer.

6. Soult was little beholden to fortune at the commencement of his movements. Her first contradiction was the bad weather, which breaking up the roads delayed the concentration of his army at St. Jean Pied de Port for two days; and the effect which heavy rain and hard marches have upon the vigor and confidence of soldiers who are going to attack is well known. If he had commenced the 23d instead of the 25th, the surprise would have been more complete, his army more brisk; and as no conscript battalions would have arrived to delay Reille, that general would have been more ready in his attack; and might possibly have escaped the fog which on the 26th stopped his march along the superior crest of the mountain towards Vellatte. On the other hand the allies would have been spared the unsuccessful assault on San Sebastian, and the Col de Maya might have been better furnished with troops. However Soult's combinations were so well knit, that more than one error in execution, more than one accident of fortune, were necessary to baffle him. Had D'Erlon followed his instructions even on the 26th, Hill would have been shouldered off the valley of Lanz, and there would have been twenty thousand additional French troops in the combats of the 27th and 28th. Such failures however generally attend extensively combined movements, and it is not certain that D'Erlon could have won the Col de Maya if all

Stewart's forces had been posted here. It would perhaps have been more strictly within the rules of art, if D'Erlon had been directed to leave one of his three divisions to menace the Col de Maya while he marched with the other two by St. Etienne de Baygorry up the Alduides. This movement, covered by the national guards who occupied the mountain of La Houssa, could not have been stopped by Campbell's Portuguese brigade; and would have dislodged Hill from the Bastan while it secured a junction with Soult on the crest of the Magistral chain.

7. The intrepid constancy of Byng and Ross on their several positions the 25th, the able and clean retreat made by Cole as far as the heights of Linzoain, gave full effect to the French errors; and would probably have baffled Soult at an early period, if Picton had comprehended the importance of his position. Wellington said the concentration of the army would have been effected on the 27th, if that officer and Cole had not agreed in thinking it impossible to make a stand behind Linzoain; and surely the necessity of retreating on that day may be questioned. For if Cole, with ten thousand men, maintained the position in front of Altobiscar, Ibañeta, and Atalosti, Picton might have maintained the more contracted one behind Linzoain and Erro with twenty thousand. And that number he could have assembled, because Campbell reached Eugui long before the evening of the 26th; and Wellington had directed O'Donnel to keep three thousand five hundred of the blockading troops in readiness to act in advance, of which Picton could not have been ignorant. It was impossible to turn him by the valley of Urroz, that line being too rugged for the march of an army, and not leading directly upon Pampeluna. The only roads into the Val de Zubiri were by Erro and Linzoain, lying close together, and both leading upon the village of Zubiri over the ridges which Picton occupied. The strength of the position was evident from Soult's declining an attack on the evening of the 26th, when Cole only was before him; and to abandon such ground so hastily, when the concentration of the army depended upon keeping it, appears therefore an error; aggravated by the neglect of sending timely information to Wellington, who did not know of the retreat until the morning of the 27th, and then only from General Long.\* It might be that Picton's messenger failed, but many should have been sent, when a retrograde movement involving the fate of Pampeluna was contemplated.

It has been said Cole was the adviser of this retreat, which, if completed, would have ruined Wellington's campaign. This is incorrect; Picton was not a man to be guided by others. Cole

\* Note by the Duke of Wellington, MSS.

indeed gave him a report, drawn up by Colonel Bell, an able topographer, which stated that no position suitable for a very inferior force existed between Zubiri and Pampeluna; and this was true in the sense of the report, which had reference only to a division, not to an army.\* The battle of Sauroren was indeed fought by inferior numbers; but the whole position, including the ridges occupied by Picton and the Spaniards, was only maintained by equal numbers; and if Soult had attacked seriously early on the 27th, the position would have been carried. Bell's report influenced Picton, and it was only when his troops had reached Huarte and Villalba that he suddenly resolved on battle; it was a military resolution, vigorous and prompt—and not the less worthy of praise, that he so readily adopted Cole's saving proposition, to regain the more forward heights above Zabaldica.

8. Soult appeared reluctant to attack on the 26th and 27th, yet success depended upon his forestalling the allies at their point of concentration; and it is somewhat inexplicable, that, on the 28th, having possession of the ridge beyond the Lanz river and plenty of cavalry, he should have known so little of the sixth division's movements. The general conception of his second scheme has been blamed by some of his own countrymen, apparently from ignorance of the facts, and because it failed. Crowned with success, it would have been cited as a fine illustration of the art of war. To have retired at once by the two valleys of Zubiri and Lanz, after being reinforced with twenty thousand men, would have given great importance to his repulse on the 28th; his reputation as a general, capable of restoring the French affairs, would have vanished; and mischief must have accrued, even though he should have effected his retreat safely, which, regard being had to the narrowness of the valleys, the position of Hill and Wellington's boldness, was not certain. To abandon the Val de Zubiri and secure that of Lanz; to obtain another and shorter line of retreat by the Doña Maria pass; to crush Hill with superior numbers, gain the Irurzun road, and succor San Sebastian; or, failing of that, to secure the union of the whole army, and give to his retreat the appearance of an able offensive movement—to combine all these chances by one operation immediately after a severe check, was Soult's plan: it was not impracticable, and was surely the conception of a great commander.

To succeed, however, it was essential either to beat Hill off-hand, and thus draw Wellington to that side by the way of Marcalain, or so secure the French left, that no efforts against it should prevail to the detriment of the offensive movement on the right: neither

\* Note by General Colr, MSS.



was effected. An overwhelming force drove Hill indeed from the road of Irurzun, but did not crush him, because he fought so strongly, and retired with such good order. Meanwhile the French left was completely beaten, and the advantage gained on the right was more than nullified. Soult trusted to the remarkable defensive strength of the ground occupied by his left, and had reason to do so, for it was nearly impregnable, but Wellington turned it on both flanks at the same time. Yet neither Picton's advance into the Val de Zubiri, on Foy's left, nor Cole's front attack on that general, nor Byng's assault upon the village of Sauroren, would have seriously damaged the French, without the sudden and complete success of Inglis beyond the Lanz. The other attacks would indeed have forced the French to retire somewhat hastily up the valley of the Lanz, yet they could have held together in mass secure of their junction with Soult. But when the ridges running between them and the right wing of the French army were carried by Inglis, and the whole of the seventh division was thrown upon their flank and rear, the front attack became decisive. The key of the defence was on the ridge beyond the Lanz, and instead of two regiments, Clausel should have placed two divisions there.

9. Wellington's quick perception and vigorous stroke on the 30th were to be expected from such a consummate commander, yet he was not master of all the bearings of the French operations; he knew neither the extent of Hill's danger nor Soult's difficulties; otherwise it was probable he would have put stronger columns in motion, and at an earlier hour, towards the pass of Doña Maria on the morning of the 31st. Hill did not commence his march that day until eight o'clock, and it has been shown, that with the help of the seventh division he was too weak to hurt the heavy retreating mass. The faults and accidents which baffled Wellington's after operations have been sufficiently touched upon in the narrative; but he halted in the midst of his victorious career when Soult's army was broken and flying, when Suchet had retired into Catalonia and all things seemed favorable for the invasion of France. His motives for this were strong. He knew the armistice in Germany had been renewed with a view to peace, and he had therefore reason to expect Soult would be reinforced. A forward position in France would have lent his right to the enemy, who, pivoted upon St. Jean Pied de Port, could operate against his flank. His arrangements for intercourse with his dépôts and hospitals would have been more difficult and complicated; and as the enemy possessed all the French and Spanish fortresses commanding the great roads, his need to gain one at least before the fine season closed was absolute, if he would not resign his commu-

nications with the interior of Spain. Long marches and frequent combats had fatigued his troops, destroyed their shoes, and used up their musket ammunition; the loss of men had been great, especially of British in the second division, where their proportion to foreign troops was become too small; the difficulty of re-equipping the troops would have increased on entering an enemy's state, because the English system did not make war support war, and his communications would have been lengthened. Finally France was to be invaded—France in which every person was a soldier, where the whole population was armed and organized under men, not, as in other countries inexperienced in war, but who had all served more or less. Beyond the Adour he could not advance, and if a separate peace was made by the northern powers, if any misfortune befel the allies in Catalonia, so as to leave Suchet at liberty to operate towards Pampeluna—or if Soult, profiting from the possession of San Jean Pied de Port, should turn the right flank of the new position, a retreat into Spain would become necessary; and be dangerous from the hostility and warlike disposition of the French people directed in a military manner.

10. These reasons joined to the fact, that a forward position, although offering better communications from right to left, would have given the enemy greater facilities for operating against an army which, until the fortresses fell, must hold a defensive and somewhat extended line, were conclusive as to the rashness of an invasion; but they do not appear so conclusive as to the necessity of stopping short after the action of the 2d of August. The questions were distinct. The one was a great measure involving vast political and military conditions, the other was simply whether he should profit from the enemy's distress; and in this view the objections above mentioned, save the want of shoes, the scarcity of ammunition and the fatigue of the troops, are inapplicable. But in the two last particulars the allies were not so badly off as the enemy, and in the first not so deficient as to cripple the army; wherefore, if the advantage to be gained was worth the effort, it was an error to halt.

The solution of the problem is to be found in the comparative condition of the armies. Soult had recovered his reserve, his cavalry, and artillery; Wellington was reinforced by Graham's corps, which was more numerous and powerful than Villatte's reserve. The new chances then were in favor of the allies, and the action on the 2d of August proved that their opponents could not stand before them; one more victory would have gone nigh to destroy the French force altogether;\* for such was the disorder, that Maucune

\* Soult's Report, MSS.

had on the 2d only one thousand men left out of more than five thousand, and on the 6th he had still a thousand stragglers, besides killed and wounded; Conroux and La Martiniere were scarcely in better plight, and the losses of the other divisions were great. Foy's eight thousand men were cut off from the main body; and the Nivelle, the sources of which were in the allies' power, was behind the French. With their left pressed from the pass of Maya, their front assailed by the main body, they could hardly have kept together, since more than twenty-one thousand men, exclusive of Foy's troops, were then absent from their colors. As late as the 12th of August, Soult told the minister of war, that he was indeed preparing to assail his enemy again but had not the means of resisting a counter-attack,\* although he held a different language to his army and to the people of the country.

Had Cæsar halted because his soldiers were fatigued, Pharsalia would have been but a common battle.

\* Appendix 26.

# BOOK XXII.

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## CHAPTER I.

**New positions of the armies—Lord Melville's mismanagement of the naval co-operation—Siege of St. Sebastian—Progress of the second attack.**

AFTER the combats of Echallar and Ivantelly, Soult adopted a permanent position. His left, under D'Erlon, was on the hills of Ainhoa with an advanced guard overhanging Urdax and Zagaramurdi; his centre, under Clausel, was in advance of Sarre, guarding the issues from Vera and Echallar, and holding the greater Rhune mountain; \* the right, under Reille, lined the lower Bidassoa to the sea—his third division being under Foy at St. Jean Pied de Port. Villatte's reserve was behind the Nivelles, near Serres; one cavalry division was quartered for the sake of forage between the Nive and Nivelles rivers, the other as far back as Dax.

Wellington occupied his old positions from the pass of Roncevalles to the mouth of the Bidassoa, but the disposition of his troops was different. Hill, reinforced by Morillo, held the Roncevalles and Alduides, having field-works at the former. The third and sixth divisions guarded the Bastan and Col de Maya; the seventh division, reinforced with O'Donnell's Spaniards, occupied Echallar and Zagaramurdi. The light division held the Santa Barbara heights, with piquets in the town of Vera; the left rested on the Bidassoa, the right on the Ivantelly rock, round which a bridle communication with Echallar was made by the soldiers. Longa was beyond the Bidassoa on the left of the light division; the fourth division was behind him, near Lesaca. The fourth Spanish army under Freyre prolonged the line from Longa to the sea; it crossed the royal causeway, occupied Irun and Fontarabia and guarded the Jaizquibel mountain. The first division was behind Freyre; the fifth division resumed the siege of San Sebastian, and the blockade of Pampeluna was given to Carlos d'España.

These dispositions, made with increased means, were more powerful for defence than the former. A strong corps under one general was entrenched at Roncevalles; and in the Bastan, two British divisions, admonished by Stewart's error, were more than

\* Soult, MSS. Plan 10, page 846.

sufficient to defend the Col de Maya. The Echallar mountains were, with the aid of O'Donnel's Spaniards, equally secure; and the reserves posted near Lesaca supported the left, now the most important part of the line. The castles of Zaragoza and Daroca had fallen, and the Empecinado, directed upon Alcanitz, maintained the communication between the Catalan army and Mina; the latter and Duran were near Jaca, from whence they could retreat by Sanguessa on Pampeluna. General Paris, being thus menaced, retired, after a skirmish, into France, leaving eight hundred men in Jaca. Lord William Bentinck was then before Taragona. The allies were thus in direct military communication from the Mediterranean to the Bay of Biscay, while the French could only communicate circuitously through France.

Soult did not fear a front attack, but the augmentation of force at Roncesvalles and Maya was disquieting, as menacing to turn him by the course of the Nive. Paris was therefore placed at Oleron to support Foy; the fortresses of St. Jean Pied de Port and Navareins were armed as a pivot of operations on that side; Bayonne served a like purpose on the other flank; and a fortified line from the mouth of the Bidassoa, up to the rocks of Mondarain and the Nive, was commenced. But Wellington, having little to fear from a renewed attack on the side of Pampeluna, was wholly bent on the siege of St. Sebastian. Nor was that a trifling operation, for he was thwarted in a manner to prove that the English ministers were no better than the Spanish and Portuguese authorities. Lord Melville was at the head of the Admiralty; under him the navy of England first met with disaster in battle; and his negligence in giving maritime aid to the operations in Spain went nigh to fasten a like misfortune on the army. This, combined with the cabinet scheme of sending Wellington to Germany, shows that time had taught the English ministers nothing as to the Peninsular war; or that, elated with the array of sovereigns against Napoleon, they were now careless of a cause so mixed up with democracy. That Lord Melville, a man of ordinary capacity, should have been suffered to retard and endanger the final success of a general, whose sure judgment and extraordinary merit were authenticated by exploits unparalleled in English warfare, would be incredible if Wellington's correspondence, and that of Mr. Stuart, did not establish the following facts:—

1. Desertion from the enemy was stopped, chiefly because the Admiralty refused to let the ships of war carry deserters or prisoners to England; they were thus heaped up at Lisbon, and maltreated by the Portuguese government, which checked all desire in the French troops to come over.

2. When the disputes with America commenced, Mr. Stuart's efforts to obtain flour for the army were vexatiously thwarted by the Admiralty; which permitted, if it did not encourage, the English ships of war to capture American vessels trading under the secret licenses.

3. The refusal of the Admiralty to establish certain cruisers along the coast caused the loss of many store ships and merchantmen, to the great detriment of the army before it quitted Portugal. Fifteen were taken off Oporto, and one close to the bar of Lisbon, in May.\* And afterwards, the Mediterranean packet, bearing despatches from Lord William Bentinck, was captured, which led to lamentable consequences; for the papers were not in cipher, and contained detailed accounts of plots against the French in Italy, with the names of the principal persons engaged.

4. A like neglect of the coast of Spain caused ships containing money, shoes, and other indispensable stores, to remain in port, or risk being taken on the passage by cruisers issuing from Santona, Bayonne, and Bordeaux.† And while the communications of the allies were thus intercepted, the French coasting vessels supplied their army and fortresses without difficulty.

5. After the battle of Vittoria, Wellington was forced to use French ammunition, though too small for the English muskets, because the ordnance store ships which he had ordered from Lisbon to Santander could not sail for want of convoy. When the troops were in the Pyrenees, a reinforcement of five thousand men was kept at Gibraltar and Lisbon, waiting for ships of war; and the transports employed to convey them were thus withdrawn from the service of carrying home wounded men, at a time when the Spanish authorities at Bilbao refused, even for payment, to concede public buildings for hospitals.

6. When snow was falling on the Pyrenees, the soldiers were without proper clothing, because the ships containing their great-coats, though ready to sail in August, were detained at Oporto until November, waiting for convoy. When the victories of July were to be turned to profit ere the fitting season for the siege of San Sebastian should pass away, the attack of that fortress was retarded sixteen days, because a battering-train and ammunition, demanded several months before by Wellington, had not yet arrived from England.

7. During the siege, the sea communication with Bayonne was free. "Anything in the shape of a naval force," said Wellington, "would drive away sir George Collier's squadron." The garrison

\* Appendix 23.

† Wellington, MSS.

received reinforcements, artillery, ammunition, and all necessary stores for its defence, sending away the sick and wounded men in empty vessels. The Spanish general blockading Santona complained at the same time that the exertions of his troops were useless, because the French succored the place by sea when they pleased; and after the battle of Vittoria not less than five vessels laden with stores and provisions, and one transport having British soldiers and clothing on board, were taken by cruisers issuing out of that port. The great advantage of attacking San Sebastian by water as well as by land was foregone for want of naval means; and from the same cause British soldiers were withdrawn from their own service to unload store-ships; the gun-boats employed in the blockade were Spanish vessels manned by Spanish soldiers withdrawn from the army, and the store-boats were navigated by Spanish women!

8. The coasting trade between Bordeaux and Bayonne being quite free, the French, whose military means of transport had been so crippled by their losses at Vittoria that they could scarcely have collected magazines with land-carriage only, received their supplies by water, and were thus saved trouble and expense, and the unpopularity attending forced requisitions.

Between April and August, more than twenty applications and remonstrances were addressed by Wellington to the government upon these points, without producing the slightest attention. Mr. Croker, under-secretary of the Admiralty, of whose conduct he particularly complained, was permitted to write an offensive official letter to him, while his demands and the dangers to be apprehended from neglecting them were disregarded; and, to use his own words, "*since Great Britain had been a naval power; a British army had never before been left in such a situation at a most important moment.*"

Nor is it easy to determine whether negligence and incapacity, or a grovelling insensibility to national honor prevailed most in the cabinet, when we find this renowned general complaining, that the government, ignorant even to ridicule of military operations, seemed to know nothing of the nature of the element with which England was surrounded; and Lord Melville, insensible to the glorious toils of the Peninsula, telling him that his army was the last thing to be attended to!

#### RENEWED SIEGE OF ST. SEBASTIAN.

(See Plan, page 331.)

Villatte's demonstration against Longa on the 28th of July had caused the ships laden with the battering-train to put to sea; but,

on the 5th of August, the guns were re-landed, and the works against the fortress resumed. On the 8th, a notion having spread that the enemy was mining under the cask redoubt, the engineers seized the occasion to exercise their inexperienced miners by sinking a shaft and driving a gallery; the men soon acquired expertness, but the water rose in the shaft at twelve feet, and the work was discontinued when the gallery had attained eighty feet. The old trenches were repaired, the heights of San Bartolomeo were strengthened, and the convent of Antigua, built on a rock to the left of those heights, was fortified and armed with two guns to scour the open beach and sweep the bay. The siege, however, languished for want of ammunition; and during this forced inactivity the garrison received supplies and reinforcements by sea, repaired their damaged works, made new defences, filled their magazines, and put sixty-seven pieces of artillery in a condition to play. Eight hundred and fifty men had been killed and wounded since the commencement of the attack in July; but fresh men came by sea, and more than two thousand six hundred good soldiers were still present under arms. And to evince their confidence, they celebrated the emperor's birth-day by crowning the castle with a splendid illumination, encircling it with a fiery legend to his honor in characters so large as to be distinctly read by the besiegers.

On the 19th, after a delay of sixteen days, the battering train arrived from England, and in the night of the 22d, fifteen heavy pieces were placed in battery, eight at the right attack, seven at the left. A second battering train came on the 23d, augmenting the number of pieces of various kinds to a hundred and seventeen, including a large Spanish mortar; but, with characteristic negligence, this enormous armament had been sent out from England with no more shot and shells than would suffice for one day's consumption!

In the night of the 23d, the batteries on the Chofres were reinforced with four long pieces, and four sixty-eight pound carronades; the left attack had six additional guns. Ninety sappers and miners had come with the train from England, the seamen under Lieutenant O'Reilly were again attached to the batteries, and part of the field-artillerymen were brought to the siege. The Chofre batteries were also enlarged to contain forty-eight pieces, and two batteries for thirteen pieces were begun on the heights of Bartolomeo. These last were to breach, at seven hundred yards distance, the faces of the left demi-bastion of the horn work, that of St. John on the main front, and the end of the high curtain; for these works, rising in gradation one above another, were in the same line of shot. The approaches on the isthmus were pushed for



ward by the sap, but the old trenches were still imperfect; and, before daylight on the 25th, the French, coming from the horn work, swept the left of the parallel, injured the sap, and made some prisoners.

In the night of the 25th, the batteries were all armed on both sides of the Urumea, and on the 26th, fifty-seven pieces, opening with a general salvo, continued to play with astounding noise and rapidity until evening. The firing from the Chofre hills destroyed the revêtement of the demi-bastion of St. John, and nearly ruined the towers at the old breach, together with the wall connecting them; but at the isthmus, the batteries, although they injured the horn work, made little impression on the main front, from which they were too far distant.

Wellington, present at this attack, and discontented with the operation, then ordered a battery for six guns to be constructed amongst some ruined houses on the right of the parallel, three hundred yards from the main front. Two shafts were also sunk, with a view to drive galleries for its protection against the enemy's mines; but the sandy soil made this work slow.

Early on the 27th, the boats of the squadron, under Lieutenant Arbuthnot, of the *Surveillante*, carrying a hundred soldiers of the ninth regiment, under Captain Cameron, attacked the Island of Santa Clara. The troops landed, with some difficulty, under a heavy fire, but a lodgment was made, with the loss of only twenty-eight men and officers, of whom eighteen were seamen. In the night, the French sallied against the new battery on the isthmus; but, as Colonel Cameron, of the ninth regiment, met them on the very edge of the trenches with the bayonet, the attempt failed, yet it delayed the arming of the battery. At daybreak, the renewed fire of the besiegers was extremely heavy, and the shrapnel shells were supposed to be very destructive; nevertheless, the practice with that missile was very uncertain; the bullets frequently flew amongst the guards in the parallel, and one struck the field officer. In the course of the day another sally was commenced, but the enemy, being fired upon, did not persist. The trenches were now furnished with banquettes and parapets as fast as the quantity of gabions and fascines would permit; yet the work was slow; because the Spanish authorities of Guipuscoa, like those in every other part of Spain, neglected to provide carts to convey the materials from the woods, and this hard labor was performed by Portuguese soldiers; these things, however, should have been prepared during the blockade.

Wellington visited the works again, and the advanced battery was armed with four guns, and opened next morning; but an ac-

cident prevented the arrival of one gun, the enemy dismounted another, and only two, instead of six guns, as Wellington had designed, smote the demi-bastion of St. John and the end of the high curtain. However, the general firing was severe upon the castle and the town works, and the defences were damaged; the French guns were nearly silenced, and additional mortars were mounted at the Chofres, making in all sixty-three pieces, of which twenty-nine threw shells, and the superiority of the besiegers was established. Now, however, the Urumea was discovered to be fordable by Captain Alexander Macdonald of the artillery, who had waded across in the night, and passed close under the works to the breach. A few minutes would suffice to bring the enemy into the Chofre batteries, and, therefore, to save the guns from being spiked, their vents were covered at night with iron plates fastened by chains.

This day the materials and ordnance for a battery of six pieces, to take the defences of the Monte Orgullo in reverse, were sent to the island of Santa Clara; and from the Chofres, some guns played on the retaining wall of the horn-work; but with low charges, to shake down any mines constructed there, without destroying the wall itself, which offered cover for the troops in an assault. The trenches at the isthmus were now wide and good, the sap was pushed close to the horn-work; and the sea-wall, supporting the high road into the town, which had in the first assault lengthened the run and cramped the columns, was broken through to give access to the strand, and shorten the approach to the breaches. The crisis was now at hand, and in the night of the 29th, a false attack was ordered, to make the enemy spring his mines. This desperate service was executed by Lieutenant Macadam, of the ninth regiment; the order was sudden, and no volunteers were demanded, no rewards offered, no means of excitement resorted to; yet such is the inherent bravery of British soldiers, that seventeen men of the royals, the nearest at hand, immediately leaped forth ready and willing to encounter what seemed certain death. With a rapid pace, all the breaching batteries playing hotly at the time, they reached the foot of the breach unperceived, and then mounted in extended order shouting and firing; the French were too steady to be imposed upon, their musketry laid the party low, and their commander returned nearly alone to the trenches.

On the 30th, the sea flank being opened from the half bastion of St. John to the most distant of the old breaches, five hundred feet, the Chofre batteries were turned against the castle and the other defences of the Monte Orgullo. The battery on the isthmus, in conjunction with the fire from the Chofres, also demolished the face of the St. John's bastion, and the end of the high curtain above it;

thus the whole of that quarter was in ruins. The San Bartolomeo batteries then broke the demi-bastion of the horn-work, and Wellington, after examining the defences, decided to make a lodgment, and ordered an assault for the next day at eleven o'clock, when the ebb of tide would leave space between the horn-work and the water. The galleries in front of the advanced battery on the isthmus were now pushed to the sea wall; and three mines were formed with the double view of opening a way for the troops to reach the strand, and rendering useless any subterranean works the enemy might have made in that part. At two o'clock in the morning of the 31st, they were sprung and opened three wide passages; these were immediately connected, and a traverse of gabions, six feet high, was run across the mouth of the main trench on the left, to screen the opening from the grape-shot of the castle. Everything was now ready for the assault; but before describing that terrible event, it will be fitting to show the exact state of the besieged in defence.

Graham had been before the place for fifty-two days, during thirty of which the attack was suspended. All this time the garrison had labored incessantly; and though the besiegers' fire appeared to have ruined the defences of the enormous breach in the sea flank, it was not so. A perpendicular fall behind of more than twenty feet barred progress; and beyond, amongst the ruins of the burned houses, was a strong counter-wall, fifteen feet high, loopholed for musketry and parallel with the breaches, which were also cut off from the sound part of the rampart by traverses at the extremities. The only really practicable road into the town was by the narrow end of the high curtain above the half bastion of St. John. About the middle of the great breach stood the tower of Los Hornos, still capable of some defence, and beneath it a mine charged with twelve hundred weight of powder. The streets were all trenched and furnished with traverses to dispute the passage and cover a retreat to the Monte Orgullo; to reach the main breach, it was necessary also to form a lodgment in the horn-work, or pass, as in the former assault, under a flanking fire of musketry for two hundred yards; and the first step was close under the sea wall at the salient angle of the covered way, where two mines, charged with eight hundred pounds of powder, were prepared.

Besides these retrenchments and mines, the French had still some artillery in reserve. One sixteen-pounder mounted at St. Elmo flanked the left of the breaches on the river face; a twelve and an eight pounder, preserved in the casemates of the Cavalier, were ready to flank the land face of the half-bastion of St. John;\*

\* Beluas.

many guns from the Monte Orgullo, especially those of the Mirador, could play upon the columns, and there was a four-pounder hidden on the horn-work to be brought into action when the assault commenced. Neither the resolution of the governor nor the courage of the garrison was abated, but the overwhelming fire of the last few days had reduced the number of fighting men; and Rey who had only two-hundred and fifty men in reserve, demanded of Soult whether his brave garrison should be exposed to another assault. "The army would endeavor to succor him" was the reply, and he abided his fate.

Napoleon's ordinance, which forbade the surrender of a fortress without having stood at least one assault, has been strongly censured by English writers upon slender grounds. The obstinate defences made by French governors in the Peninsula were the results; and to condemn an enemy's system from which we have ourselves suffered will scarcely bring it into disrepute. The argument runs that the besiegers working by the rules of art must make way into the place and to risk an assault for the sake of military glory or to augment the loss of the enemy, is to sacrifice brave men uselessly; capitulation always followed a certain advance of the besiegers in Louis the Fourteenth's time; and to suppose Napoleon's upstart generals possessed superior courage and sense of military honor to the high-minded nobility of that age, was quite inadmissible. It has been rather whimsically added, also, that obedience to the emperor's orders might suit a predestinarian Turk, but could not be tolerated by a reflecting Christian. From this it would seem, that certain nice distinctions as to extent and manner reconcile human slaughter with Christianity; and the true standard of military honor was fixed by the intriguing, depraved, and insolent Louis the Fourteenth. It may, however, be supposed, that, as Napoleon's generals far surpassed the cringing courtier commanders of Louis in military daring, they possessed greater military virtue. Moreover, Marshal Villars held that a governor should never surrender, and when his works were ruined, should break through the besiegers. Lord Clive also recommended that an ordinance similar to Napoleon's should be applied to British fortresses in India. Finally, Napoleon's ordinance was merely a revival of one issued by Louis himself!

But the whole argument rests on false grounds. To inflict loss on an enemy is the essence of war; and as the bravest men will always be foremost in an assault, the loss thus occasioned may be of the utmost importance. To resist when nothing can be gained or saved is an act of barbarous courage which reason spurns at; but Napoleon only demanded a resistance which should make it

dangerous for the besiegers to hasten a siege beyond the rules of art,—he would not have a weak governor yield to a simulation of force,—he desired that military honor should rest upon the courage and resources of men rather than upon the strength of walls: in fine, he made a practicable application of the proverb that necessity is the mother of invention. Granted that a siege conducted with sufficient means must reduce the fortress attacked; still a governor may display his resources of mind. Vauban admits of one assault and several retrenchments after a lodgment is made on the body of the place. Napoleon only insisted that every effort which courage and genius could dictate should be exhausted before a surrender, and those efforts can never be defined or bounded before-hand. Tarifa is a happy example.

To be consistent, any attack which deviates from the rules of art must also be denounced as barbarous; yet, how seldom has a general all the necessary means at his disposal. In Spain, not one siege could be conducted by the British army according to the rules. And there is a manifest weakness in praising the Spanish defence of Zaragoza, and condemning Napoleon, because he demanded from regular troops a devotion similar to that displayed by peasants and artisans. What governor was ever in a more desperate situation than Bizanet was at Bergen-op-Zoom? General Graham, with a hardihood and daring which would alone place him amongst the foremost men of enterprise which Europe can boast of, threw more than two thousand men upon the ramparts of that almost impregnable fortress. The young soldiers of the garrison, surprised in the night, were dispersed, were flying, the British had possession of the walls for several hours! yet some cool and brave officers rallied their men, charged up the narrow ramps, and drove the assailants over the parapets into the ditch; they who could not at first defend their works were then able to retake them; and so completely successful and illustrative of the principle was this counter-attack, that the number of prisoners equalled that of the garrison. There are no rules to limit energy and genius, and no man knew better than Napoleon how to call those qualities forth: he possessed them himself in the utmost perfection, and created them in others.

## CHAPTER II.

Storming of St. Sebastian—Lord Wellington calls for volunteers from the first, fourth and light divisions—The place is assaulted and taken—The town burned—The castle is bombarded, and surrenders—Observations.

## STORMING OF SAN SEBASTIAN.

To assault the breaches without having destroyed the enemy's defences or established a lodgment on the horn-work was, notwithstanding the increased fire and greater facilities of the besiegers, obviously a repetition of error. And the same generals who had before made their disapproval of such operations public, now more freely dealt out censures, not ill-founded, but very indiscreet, since there is much danger when doubts come down from the commanders to the soldiers. Wellington thought the fifth division had been thus discouraged. He was incensed and demanded fifty volunteers from each of the fifteen regiments composing the first, fourth, and light divisions, *men who could show other troops how to mount a breach*. Such was the phrase employed, and seven hundred and fifty gallant soldiers instantly marched to San Sebastian in answer to the appeal. Colonel Cooke and Major Robertson led the guards and Germans of the first division; Major Rose commanded the men of the fourth division; Colonel Hunt, a daring officer who had already won his promotion at former assaults, was at the head of the fierce rugged veterans of the light division; yet there were good officers and brave soldiers in the fifth division.

It being at first supposed that Wellington designed only a simple lodgment on the great breach, the volunteers and one brigade of the fifth division only were ordered to be ready; but in a council held at night, Major Smith maintained that the orders were misunderstood, as no lodgment could be formed, unless the high curtain was gained. General Oswald being called to the council, was of the same opinion; whereupon the remainder of the fifth division was brought to the trenches; and General Bradford having offered the services of his Portuguese brigade, was told he might ford the Urumea and assail the farthest breach if he judged it advisable. Leith had now resumed command of the fifth division, and directed the attack from the isthmus; but he was extremely offended with the volunteers, and would not suffer them to lead the assault; some

he spread along the trenches to keep down the fire of the horn-work, the remainder were held in reserve with Hay's British and Sprye's Portuguese brigades of the fifth division; to Robinson's brigade the assault was confided. It was formed in two columns, one to attack the old breach between the towers, the other to storm the bastion of St. John and the end of the high curtain. The small breach on the extreme right was left for Bradford's Portuguese, who were on the Chofre hills; some large boats filled with troops were directed to make a demonstration against the sea-line of the Monte Orgullo, and Graham overlooked the whole operations from the right bank of the river.

Heavily the morning of the 31st broke, a thick fog hid every object, and the besiegers' batteries could not open until eight o'clock; from that hour, however, a constant shower of missiles was poured upon the besieged until eleven, when Robinson's brigade quitted the trenches, and, passing through the openings in the sea-wall, was launched against the breaches. While the head of this column was still gathering on the strand, thirty yards from the salient angle of the horn-work, twelve men, under a sergeant, whose heroic death has not sufficed to preserve his name, running violently forward, leaped upon the covered way with intent to cut the sausage of the enemy's mines. The French, startled by this sudden assault, fired the train prematurely; but, though the sergeant and his followers were all destroyed, and the high sea-wall thrown with a dreadful crash upon the head of the advancing column, not more than forty men were crushed by the ruins, and the rush of the troops was scarcely checked. The forlorn hope had before passed beyond the play of the mine, and now speeded along the strand amidst a shower of grape and shells, the leader, Lieutenant Macguire, of the fourth regiment, conspicuous from his long white plume, his fine figure, and his swiftness, bounding far ahead of his men in all the pride of youthful strength and courage; but at the foot of the great breach he fell dead, and the stormers went sweeping like a dark surge over his body; many died, however, with him, and the trickling of wounded men to the rear was incessant.\*

This time there was a broad strand left by the retreating tide, and the sun had dried the rocks; yet they still disturbed the order and closeness of the formation, and the main breach was two hundred yards distant. The French, seeing the first mass pass the horn-work, regardless of its broken bastion, crowded to the river face, and poured their musketry into the second column, as it rushed along a few yards below them; but the English returned

\* Cooke's Memoirs.

this fire without slackening their speed. Then the batteries of Monte Orgullo and the St. Elmo sent down showers of shot and shells, the two pieces on the Cavalier swept the face of the breach in St. John, the four-pounder in the horn-work was suddenly mounted on the broken bastion, and poured grape shot into the rear. Thus scourged with fire from all sides, the stormers, their array broken alike by the shot and by the rocks they passed over, reached their destinations. The first column soon gained the top of the great breach, but the unexpected gulf below could only be passed at a few places where meagre parcels of the burned houses were still attached to the rampart, and the deadly French muskets, clattering from the loop-holed wall beyond, strewed the crest of the ruins with dead. In vain the following multitude, covering the ascent, sought entrance at every part; to advance was impossible, and, slowly sinking downwards, the mass remained stubborn and immovable on the lower part of the breach. There they were covered from the musketry in front; but from isolated points, especially from Los Hornos, under which the great mine was placed, the French still smote them with small arms, and from Monte Orgullo came shells and grape without intermission.

At the half bastion of St. John the access to the top of the high curtain being quite practicable, the efforts to force a way were more persevering and constant, and the slaughter was in proportion; for the traverse on the flank was defended by French grenadiers who would not yield; the two pieces on the Cavalier itself swept the front of the opening, and the four-pounder and musketry from the horn-work swept the river face. Some sappers and a working party attached to the assaulting columns endeavored to form a lodgment; but no artificial materials had been provided, and most of the laborers were killed before they could raise the loose rocky fragments into a cover. During this time the British counter-fire of artillery killed many; and the reserve brigades of the fifth division were pushed on by degrees to feed the attack, until the left wing of the ninth regiment only remained in the trenches. The volunteers, also, who had been with difficulty restrained in the trenches, "calling out to know why they had been brought there if they were not to lead the assault," these men, whose presence had given such offence to Leith that he would have kept them altogether from the assault, being now let loose, went like a whirlwind to the breaches, and the crowded masses swarmed up the face of the ruins; but on reaching the crest line, they came down again like a falling wall: crowd after crowd were seen to mount, to totter, to sink; the French fire was unabated, the smoke floated away, and the crest of the breach bore no living man!



Graham, standing on the nearest of the Chofre batteries, beheld this frightful destruction with a stern resolution to win at any cost; and he was a man to have put himself at the head of the last company, and die sword in hand upon the breach, rather than sustain a second defeat; yet neither his confidence nor his resources were yet exhausted. He directed an attempt to be made on the horn-work, and turned all the Chofre batteries, and one on the isthmus, that is to say, the concentrated fire of fifty heavy pieces upon the high curtain. The shot ranged over the heads of the troops, now gathered at the foot of the breach; and the stream of missiles thus poured along the upper surface broke down the traverses, and in its fearful course, shattering all things, strewed the rampart with the mangled limbs of the defenders.\* When this flight of bullets first swept over the heads of the soldiers, a cry arose from some inexperienced people, "to retire, because the batteries were firing on the stormers;" but the veterans of the light division under Hunt were not men to be so disturbed; and in the very heat and fury of the cannonade, they effected a solid lodgment in some ruins of houses actually within the rampart on the right of the great breach.

For half an hour this horrid tempest smote upon the works and the houses behind; and when it ceased, the small clatter of the French muskets showed that the fight was renewed. At this time, also, the thirteenth Portuguese regiment, led by Major Snodgrass, and followed by a detachment of the twenty-fourth, under Colonel Macbean, entered the river from the Chofres. The ford was deep, the water rose above the waist, and when the soldiers reached the middle of the stream, which was two hundred yards wide, a heavy gun struck the head of the column with a shower of grape; the havoc was fearful, yet the survivors closed and moved on. A second discharge from the same piece tore the ranks from front to rear; still the regiment moved on; and amidst a confused fire of musketry from the ramparts and of artillery from St. Elmo, from the castle, and from the Mirador, landed on the left bank, and rushed against the third breach. Macbean's men, following with equal bravery, reinforced the great breach eighty yards to the left of the other, although the line of ruins seemed to extend the whole way.

Then the fighting became fierce and obstinate again at all the breaches; but the French musketry still rolled with deadly effect, the heaps of slain increased, and once more the great mass of stormers sunk to the foot of the ruins unable to win—the living sheltered themselves as they could, and the dead and wounded lay

\*Notes by Colonel Hunt, MSS.

so thickly, that hardly could it be judged whether the hurt or unhurt were the most numerous.

It was now evident the assault must fail, unless some accident intervened; for the tide was rising, the reserves all engaged, and no greater effort could be expected from men whose courage had been already pushed to the verge of madness. In this crisis fortune interfered. A number of powder barrels, live shells, and combustible materials, which the French had accumulated behind the traverses for their defence, caught fire. Soon a bright consuming flame wrapped the whole of the high curtain, a succession of loud explosions were heard, hundreds of the French grenadiers were destroyed, the rest were thrown into confusion; and while the ramparts were still enveloped with suffocating eddies of smoke, the British soldiers broke in at the first traverse. The defenders, bewildered by this terrible disaster, yielded for a moment, yet soon rallied, and a close desperate struggle took place along the summit of the high curtain; but the fury of the stormers, whose numbers increased every moment, could not be stemmed. The French colors on the Cavalier were torn away by Lieutenant Gethin, of the eleventh regiment: the horn-work, the land front below the curtain, the loop-holed wall behind the great breach, were all abandoned; the light division soldiers, who had already established themselves in the ruins on the French left, penetrated to the streets; and the Portuguese, at the small breach, mixed with British who had wandered to that point seeking for an entrance, burst in on their side.

Five hours the dreadful battle had lasted at the walls, and now the stream of war went pouring into the town. The undaunted governor still disputed the victory for a short time with the aid of his barricades; but several hundreds of his men were cut off and taken in the horn-work, and even to effect a retreat behind the line of defences which separated the town from the Monte Orgullo was difficult: however, a crowd of his troops, flying from the horn-work along the harbor flank of the town, broke through a body of the British, who had reached the vicinity of the fortified convent of Santa Teresa. This post was the only one retained by the French in the town, and it was thought that Monte Orgullo might have been carried, if a general to direct the troops had been at hand; but whether from wounds or accident, no officer of that rank entered the place until long after the breach had been won; the battalion chiefs were thus embarrassed for want of orders, and a thunder-storm, coming down from the mountains with unbounded fury immediately after the place was carried, added to the confusion of the fight.

This storm seemed to be a signal from hell, for the perpetration of villany, which would have shamed the most ferocious barbarians of antiquity. At Rodrigo, intoxication and plunder had been the principal object; at Badajos, lust and murder were joined to rapine and drunkenness; but at San Sebastian, the direst, the most revolting cruelty was added to the catalogue of crimes,—one atrocity of which a girl of seventeen was the victim, staggers the mind by its enormous, incredible, indescribable barbarity. The resolution of the troops to throw off discipline was quickly made manifest. A British staff-officer was pursued with a volley of small arms, and escaped with difficulty from men who mistook him for the provost-marshal of the fifth division; a Portuguese adjutant, who endeavored to prevent some wickedness, was put to death in the market-place, not with sudden violence from a single ruffian, but deliberately by a number of English soldiers; and though many officers exerted themselves to preserve order, and many men were well conducted, the rapine and violence commenced by villains spread; the camp-followers soon crowded into the place, and the disorder continued until the flames, following the steps of the plunderer, put an end to his ferocity by destroying the whole town. Three generals, Leith, Oswald, and Robinson, had been hurt in the trenches; Sir Richard Fletcher, chief engineer, a brave man who had long served his country honorably, was killed; Colonel Burgoyne, second engineer, was wounded, and the carnage at the breaches was appalling. The volunteers, although brought late into the action, had nearly half their numbers struck down; most of the regiments of the fifth division suffered in the same proportion, and the whole loss since the renewal of the siege exceeded two thousand five hundred men and officers.

When the town was taken, the steep and rugged Monte Orgullo, with its citadel, remained to be assailed. It presented four batteries connected with masonry in first line; and from the extremities, ramps protected by redans led to the Santa Teresa convent, which offered a salient point of defence. On the side facing Santa Clara, and behind the Orgullo were some sea batteries; and if all these works had been of good construction, and guarded by fresh troops, the second siege would have been difficult. But the force of the garrison was shattered by the recent assault, most of the engineers had been killed, the governor and many others wounded, five hundred men were sick or hurt, the soldiers fit for duty did not exceed thirteen hundred, and they had four hundred prisoners to guard. The castle was small, the bomb-proofs scarcely sufficed to protect the ammunition and provisions, and only ten guns remained in a condition for service, three of which were on the sea

line. There was very little water, and the troops had to lie out on the naked rock exposed to fire, or only covered by the asperities of ground: Rey and his brave garrison were, however, still resolute to fight, and they received nightly by sea small supplies of ammunition.

Wellington arrived the day after the assault. Regular approaches could not be carried up the steep naked rock, he doubted the power of vertical fire, and ordered batteries to be formed on the captured works of the town, intending to breach the enemy's remaining lines of defence, and then storm the Orgullo. Meanwhile seeing the Santa T eresa would enable the French to sally by the rampart on the left of the allies, he composed his first line with a few troops strongly barricaded, and placed a supporting body in the market-place with strong reserves on the high curtain and flank ramparts. But from the convent, which was actually in the town, the enemy killed many of the besiegers; and when after several days it was assaulted, they set the lower parts on fire, and retired by a communication made from the roof to a ramp on the hill behind. All this time the flames were licking up the houses, and the Orgullo was overwhelmed with a vertical fire of shells.

On the 3d of September, the governor was summoned, but his resolution was not to be shaken, and the vertical fire was therefore continued day and night. The British prisoners suffered as well as the enemy;\* for the officer commanding in the castle, irritated by the misery of the garrison, cruelly refused to let the unfortunate captives make trenches to cover themselves;† the French also complain that their wounded and sick men, lying in an empty magazine with a black flag flying, and having the English prisoners in their red uniforms placed around to strengthen the claim of humanity, were fired upon.

Guns for the new batteries were now brought from the Chofres across the Urumea, at first by night, but the difficulty of struggling with the water in darkness induced the transport by day and within reach of the French batteries, which however did not fire. The flaming houses impeded the works, but the ruins furnished cover for marksmen to gall the French, and the guns on Santa Clara were augmented and worked by seamen. With the besieged ammunition was scarce, the horrible vertical fire subdued their energy, and the besiegers labored freely until the 8th; then, fifty-nine heavy pieces opened at once from the island, the isthmus, the horn-work and the Chofres, and in two hours the Mirador and Queen's battery were broken, the French fire extinguished, the hill torn and

\* Jones.

† Belas.

furrowed in a frightful manner; the bread-ovens were destroyed, a magazine exploded, and the castle, small and crowded with men, was overlaid with the descending shells. Then, the governor, proudly bending to fate, surrendered. On the 9th, this brave man and his heroic garrison, reduced to one-third of their original number, and leaving five hundred wounded behind them in the hospital, marched out with the honors of war. The Spanish flag was hoisted under a salute of twenty-one guns, and the siege terminated after sixty-three days open trenches; precisely when the tempestuous season, then beginning to vex the coast, would have rendered a continuance of the sea blockade impossible.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. San Sebastian, a third-rate fortress, and in bad condition when first invested, resisted a besieging army possessing an enormous battering-train for sixty-three days. This is to be attributed partly to the errors of the besiegers, principally to obstructions extraneous to the military operations; and conspicuous among the last was the misconduct of the Admiralty and general negligence of the government. The latter retarded the siege for sixteen days, the former enabled the garrison to increase its means as the siege proceeded. The Spanish failures came next, the authorities would not supply carts and boats, and even refused the use of their public buildings for hospitals! Thus, between the sea and the shore, receiving aid from neither, Wellington had to conduct an operation which more than any other depends for success upon labor and provident care: it was the first time that an important siege was maintained by women's exertions, for the stores of the besiegers were landed from boats rowed by Spanish girls! Soult's advance was but a slight interruption; the want of ammunition would have equally delayed the siege. The measure of the English ministers' negligence is thus obtained: it was more hurtful than the operations of sixty thousand men under a great general.

In the second siege, the approaches on the isthmus were pushed further than in the first attack, and the French fire on the front was more quelled; the openings made in the sea-wall enabled the troops to get out of the trenches more rapidly, and shortened the distance to the breach. These were advantages, but not proportionate to the increase of the besiegers' means, which were sufficient to ruin all the defences, if employed to silence the enemy's fire, according to the rules of art: a lodgment in the horn-work could then have been made with little difficulty, and the breach attacked without much danger.

The faults of the first attack were repeated in the second, and

the enemy's resources had increased, because a sea intercourse with France was never cut off; it follows, there was no reasonable chance of success in the assault, nor even to make a lodgment in the breach, for the workmen, being without materials, failed to effect that object. The primary arrangement, the change adopted in the council of war, the option given to Bradford, the remarkable fact that the simultaneous attack on the horn-work was only thought of when the first efforts against the breach had failed, all prove that the enemy's defensive means were underrated, and the success exceeded the preparations to obtain it. The place was in fact won by accident. For the explosion of the great mine under Los Hornos was only prevented by a happy shot which cut the sausage of the train during the fight; and this was followed by the ignition of the French powder-barrels and shells along the high curtain, which alone opened the way into the town. Graham's firmness and perseverance in the assault, and the judicious usage of his artillery during the action, were no mean helps to the victory; it was on such occasions that his prompt genius shone; yet it was nothing wonderful that heavy guns at short distances, the range perfectly known, should strike with certainty along a line of rampart more than twenty-seven feet above the heads of the troops. Such practice was to be expected, and Graham's genius was more evinced by the promptness of the thought and the trust he put in the valor of his soldiers. It was more remarkable that the stormers did not relinquish their attack when thus exposed to their own guns; for it is a mistake to say no mischief occurred: a serjeant of the ninth regiment was killed, close to his commanding officer, and other casualties also had place.

4. It is supposed the explosion on the ramparts was caused by the cannonade from the Chofres; yet a cool observer,\* whose account I have adopted, because he was a spectator undisturbed, affirms that the cannonade ceased before Snodgrass forded the river, and the great explosion did not happen until half-an-hour after that event. That intrepid exploit of the Portuguese was thought one of the principal causes of success; and an entrance was certainly made at the small breach by several soldiers, British and Portuguese, many of the former having wandered from the great breach and got mixed with the latter, before the explosion happened on the high curtain. Whether those men would have been followed by greater numbers is doubtful, but the lodgment made by the light division volunteers within the great breach was solid, and could have been maintained.† The French call the Portuguese attack a feint. Graham certainly did not found much upon it.

\* Captain Cooke.

† Bellas.