

Rodrigo; the other to co-operate with Dupont in taking possession of Andalusia. The first of these, under Loison, having advanced as far as Rodrigo, and finding the whole country in arms, and the gates of the place shut, suspended its operations, and fell back; the second under Avril, was not more fortunate in its undertakings. Badajoz had declared for King Ferdinand; the whole of the frontier was in arms; and the Spaniards and Portuguese, of whom a considerable number were attached to his division, deserted by whole companies. Besides, General Spencer, with his five thousand English, lay between him and the point which he had been ordered to reach, and General Avril abandoned his enterprise. But such misfortunes were trifling when compared to others which shortly followed.

No great while elapsed before the agents of the Supreme Junta found means to communicate both to the Spanish corps, which, under Quesnel, occupied Oporto, and to Caraffa's division in Lisbon, the course which events had taken both at Bayonne and Madrid. The intelligence was received by the troops with the utmost indignation. In Oporto, they rose at once upon the General; arrested him with his staff and his escort; and having given up the city into the hands of the municipal authorities, marched away to join their countrymen in Galicia. In Lisbon they were only

prevented from adopting a similar course by the promptitude and decision of Junot. Instantly on the news from Oporto being reported to him, he caused the whole of Caraffa's corps to be arrested and disarmed ; and putting them on board of certain hulks which lay at anchor in the Tagus, he kept them there as prisoners. But the impetus to a general revolt was given ; the match was already laid to the train, and no exertions on the part of the French functionaries could hinder it from exploding.

On the first impulse of the moment, the authorities at Oporto cast Quesnel into prison, tore down the French flag, and hoisted the national standard in its place. By degrees, however, they became alarmed at the boldness of their own proceedings ; and seeing themselves deserted by the Spaniards, they began to devise schemes for averting the vengeance of the French General. Don Luiz d'Oliveira, into whose hands the temporary power had been intrusted, betrayed that trust so far as to write, in terms unworthy of a Portuguese, to Junot, and to restore the tri-coloured flag to its former position ; whilst he endeavoured, by various acts of kindness towards the French, to make amends for the violence which they had suffered a few days before. But a spirit had gone abroad in other quarters, which soon renewed in the inhabitants of Oporto that hatred of their oppressors

of which they had already given some proof; and the cry of "Death to the French—Long live the Regent!" resounded through the streets. These cries were speedily followed by a second declaration of independence. Oliveira was put to death; and a junta having formed itself, in imitation of that of Seville, proceeded, with the venerable bishop at its head, to issue proclamations, and to call upon all good Portuguese to unite against the common enemy.

The appeal of the junta was heard throughout the whole kingdom; and it was everywhere obeyed. The students at the University of Coimbra were among the first to take up arms; the peasantry of *Tras os Montes* were not less on the alert; *Algarves* was in open revolt, and the *Alentejo* ripe for insurrection. That which he had long apprehended, Junot saw at length in progress, and proceeding with a violence and energy which threatened to set all endeavours to suppress it at defiance; but Junot was not a man to succumb under difficulties, however imminent. He set himself vigorously to the task of allaying the general ferment; and he applied to that object not force alone, but all the expedients of flattering harangues and conciliatory measures.

His first act was to remit what had not been paid of the contribution formerly imposed upon the people. He next affected to take the Portu-

guese troops under his especial care, augmenting their pay, discharging their arrears, and appearing to place the utmost reliance upon their fidelity and valour; and he did his best to amuse the inhabitants of Lisbon, by a renewal of the processions and religious festivals to which they had in former times been accustomed. But whilst he pursued this course in his more general measures, he was not unmindful of the policy of striking terror by particular examples; and he set on foot a multitude of separate expeditions, with the view of crushing the rebellion in each of the towns or districts where it might appear to rage with the greatest violence. On that errand Loison, who had returned to Lisbon, was despatched against Oporto, at the head of three battalions of infantry and several squadrons of horse; Thomieres was directed to reduce Fort Nazareth; whilst Kellerman was sent to insure the obedience of Villa Franca, Alcoentre, and Alcobaça. These are but a few of the expeditions which the Duke of Abrantes found it necessary to fit out, of which some were attended with momentary success, whilst others entirely failed. But even the successes of the French proved of little solid utility to them. As long as an armed force was at hand, to oppose which no means existed, a town, or village, or even a district, would remain quiet,—the very next instant after the troops were withdrawn, all

became again tumult and commotion. Junot saw and felt his embarrassments keenly; but the moment was now rapidly approaching which promised to bring these difficulties to a head. Rumours were in hourly circulation of the coming of a British army, and at last it was officially communicated that a British army had landed.

CHAPTER V.

Arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley at Oporto—His conference with the junta—The transports assemble off Mondego, and the troops are landed—Strange conduct of General Freire and the Portuguese army—Junot takes measures to oppose the progress of the English, and calls in his detachments—Delaborde retires before Sir Arthur Wellesley—Battle of Loriga—Arrival of General Anstruther on the coast—March of the British army to Vimiero—Sir Harry Burrard arrives in the offing—Is visited by General Wellesley; but refuses to sanction an advance—The British attacked by Junot's army—Battle of Vimiero.

SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, as soon as he had closed his correspondence with the junta of Galicia, and directed the transports which conveyed his troops to rendezvous at the mouth of the Mondego, proceeded in person to Oporto, for the purpose of arranging some plan of campaign with the government of that place, or, as it then termed itself, the Supreme Junta of Portugal. He was received by the bishop, as head of the body, with every ap-

pearance of cordiality ; and all the supplies of different kinds of which he stood in need, including draft cattle of various descriptions, were readily promised to him ; but when he proposed to effect a landing there, and to co-operate with the garrison in a movement upon the capital, a variety of objections were started to the measure. It was suggested that, by landing on some part of the coast nearer to Lisbon, Junot might be attacked before all or even most of his detachments, at that moment scattered through the country, could be called in ; whilst the Portuguese in Oporto would be ready to intercept his retreat, in case he should endeavour to make any movement towards Galicia. How far Sir Arthur was swayed by this reasoning, it would be presuming to pronounce ; a communication from Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, it is believed, determined him to seek a point of landing elsewhere ; and he followed his transports to the appointed place of meeting in Mondego Bay.

On his arrival there, he found that important despatches from England were waiting for him. By these, he was informed that fresh troops might be expected to join his army every moment ; one division being already embarked at Ramsgate under Brigadier-general Anstruther, whilst another was assembling at Harwich ; but it was at the same time intimated to him that Sir Hew

Dalrymple had received orders to proceed from Gibraltar in the character of commander-in-chief; Sir Harry Burrard had been nominated as second; and Sir John Moore, who had just returned from the Baltic with a corps of ten thousand men, was likewise to serve in Portugal. In spite of these arrangements, however, Sir Arthur was enjoined to make good his landing, whenever a favourable opportunity should offer, and to enter at once upon any series of operations, for the successful accomplishment of which he might judge himself sufficiently strong.

In obedience to these instructions, and having conferred with Sir Charles Cotton, General Wellesley issued orders for the immediate disembarkation of his corps at the mouth of the Mondego. A fast-sailing vessel was at the same time despatched, to require the immediate junction of General Spencer and his division; and every arrangement having been made, the landing began. A strong west wind and a violent surf rendered this both a tedious and a perilous operation, several boats being swamped, and some men, both sailors and soldiers, perishing among the breakers; but after four days of severe fatigue, the force was disembarked, including the division of General Spencer, which arrived just as the last division began to leave their transports. The whole British army, amounting to rather more

than thirteen thousand men, bivouacked on the 8th of August on the beach.

Whilst the British force was thus employed, General Bernardin Freire arrived at Coimbra with about seven thousand infantry and six hundred cavalry of the Portuguese army, for the purpose of joining and co-operating with Sir Arthur Wellesley. These were, for the most part, wretchedly armed, and their discipline had attained to no higher degree of excellence, than usually attends raw levies suddenly called out, and as suddenly embodied; they were not therefore likely to add much to the real strength, whilst they would draw heavily upon the supplies of the invaders. Nevertheless, as it was advisable upon political grounds that the Portuguese should accompany the English in their present undertaking, it was arranged between the Generals, that both corps should move in the direction of the capital, and that they should form a junction on the 11th or 12th at the town of Leira.

In accordance with this arrangement, the advanced-guard of Sir Arthur's army began its march on the 9th of August. It consisted of some companies of riflemen of the 60th and 95th regiments, supported by the brigades of Major-general Hill and Major-general Ferguson; and it was followed on the day after by the whole of the corps. The men marched with sixty rounds of

ammunition in their cartouch-boxes, and provisions of meat, biscuit, &c. in their haversacks, sufficient for the consumption of three days ; and the column was followed by a string of mules, bearing stores of every kind. No troops ever took the field in higher spirits, or in a state of more perfect discipline. Confident in their leader, likewise, and no less confident in themselves, they desired nothing more ardently than to behold their enemy : for even thus early in the war, it was the custom of a British soldier to admit of no apprehensions as to the issue of a battle. The entire strength of the corps made up barely thirteen thousand three hundred men ; there were attached to it two hundred cavalry of the 20th light dragoons ; and its artillery mustered in all eighteen pieces.

The troops arrived in Leira, without having met with any opposition, on the 11th and 12th, and they were received by the inhabitants with enthusiastic rapture, as by persons who had long groaned under oppression, and at last beheld their deliverers. On the same day, General Freire's corps made its appearance ; but the General himself had lost that zeal for sharing in the glorious enterprise before them, which seemed to animate him during his late conference with Sir Arthur Wellesley. He began by doubting whether it would be practicable to find supplies for both armies on the same

line of march ; and he ended by requiring, as the price of his adherence to the British standard, that Sir Arthur Wellesley should subsist him and his troops from the stores of the English commissary. This was a demand with which the English General could not, of course, comply. He represented that his army, fresh from a voyage, and liable to be separated at any moment from its ships, instead of being able to furnish provisions to the troops of the country, would, in all probability, be compelled to draw upon the country for its own supplies ; and he expressed his astonishment that any such unreasonable expectation should have been formed. The discussion was maintained for some time with much forbearance on the side of Sir Arthur Wellesley, and with a degree of obstinacy on that of Freire, for which it was not very easy to account ; and it ended at length in the latter declaring his determination to withdraw himself entirely from all share in the intended series of operations. With some difficulty he was prevailed upon to leave a brigade of infantry and two hundred and fifty horse with the British army ; but the remainder he positively prohibited from moving.

Notwithstanding this exhibition of the kind of aid which he might expect from his allies, Sir Arthur determined to lose no time in prosecuting the undertaking which he had begun. From all apprehensions on the side of Spain, the intelligence

of the victory of Baylen, and of the consequent flight of Joseph from Madrid, completely freed him; and he still hoped, notwithstanding the well-known activity of the French generals, that he might be enabled to engage Junot before Loison should have had time to join him. Under this persuasion, he renewed his march on the 13th, and on the 14th reached Alcobaça, the enemy having evacuated it during the preceding night; and on the 15th his head-quarters were established at Caldas.

It has been said that, at the moment when intelligence of the landing of the British army reached Marshal Junot, his troops were scattered over many districts of Portugal, with the view of extinguishing, as fast as they appeared, the first sparks of rebellion, and putting in a state of defence such fortified posts as remained in the hands of the French. Among other generals, Loison and Thomieres, each with his division, had departed from Lisbon—the former, for the purpose of quieting the Alentejo, and relieving Elvas, already blockaded by the Spaniards; the latter, to overawe Coimbra, and reduce Fort Nazareth. Of these, Thomieres was instantly recalled; and his brigade being added to that of General Delaborde, the latter officer was directed to advance towards Mondego, that he might watch the movements of the English, and, as far as he was able, retard

their progress. General Loison was likewise called in, Junot urging him by letter, when proposing to bombard Badajoz, "to abandon all his projects, and to hasten, without delay, to Abrantes." But though he made every possible exertion, leaving behind him multitudes of sick and weary whom he found it impossible to drag along, he failed in joining Delaborde in sufficient time to prove of any essential service; for Delaborde, in obedience to the orders of his chief, marched down at the head of five or six thousand men towards the coast. As the English advanced, he gradually fell back, manifesting, however, no disinclination to risk an action, whenever the nature of the ground should authorise the measure; and it was not long before a fitting opportunity presented itself. It was the rear-guard of his column which retired from Caldas on the evening preceding the day of Sir Arthur Wellesley's arrival; and on the following morning the two armies were in sight of one another.

A trifling skirmish had occurred at Obidos on the 15th, between four companies of British riflemen and the French outposts, in which some lives were lost on both sides, and no very decided advantage obtained on either. On the 16th, again, all was quiet; Sir Arthur devoting that day to the arrangement of his own plans, and to the institution of strict and accurate inquiries as to the

situation of General Loison. He likewise reconnoitred the position which General Delaborde had assumed, and found it to be one of extraordinary strength and difficulty; indeed, its selection reflected the highest credit upon the military talents of that officer, as the following tolerably accurate description of its locality may serve to prove.

The villages of Caldas and Roliça are built north and south from each other, at the opposite extremities of an immense valley, which opens out largely towards the west; and midway between them stands the little town of Obidos, with its splendid aqueduct and its Moorish castle. Roliça itself crowns an eminence, which again is flanked on the one hand by a range of hills, on the other by rugged mountains; by the very mountains, indeed, which bend round to girdle in the vale or basin, of which notice has just been taken. Immediately in front of it there is a sandy plain, not, perhaps, in the strictest meaning of the term, woody, but studded with low firs and other shrubs; and in its rear are four or five passes, which lead through the mountains. This was the situation in which Delaborde saw fit to await the approach of the English army. His outposts, driven in from Obidos, extended now along the plain to the hills on both sides of the valley; and his line was formed on the high ground in front of the village, so as that both its flanks might rest,

one upon the mountains, the other upon a steep eminence. Of his force it is not easy to speak with confidence, the writers of different nations having made different estimates of it; but by Sir Arthur Wellesley it was computed at six thousand men; and there is no reason to believe that his judgment was formed on mistaken grounds. Be this, however, as it may, there it stood presenting a bold front to its enemies; and covering the passes by which, in case of a reverse, its retreat might at any moment be made good, or a new position seized in the mountains.

Every necessary order having been issued, and every man made aware on the evening of the 16th of the business in which he was about to be employed, the troops on the following morning stood to their arms; and just as day began to dawn, marched from the bivouac in three columns of attack. The right column, which consisted of twelve hundred Portuguese infantry, and fifty Portuguese horse, was directed to make a considerable detour, and to penetrate into the mountains, for the purpose of turning the enemy's left; it was then to wheel up, and bear down with all its weight upon the rear of Delaborde's line. The left column again, consisting of two brigades of British infantry—those of Major-general Ferguson and Brigadier-general Bowes; three companies of riflemen, a brigade of light artillery, twenty

British and twenty Portuguese horse, received orders to ascend the hills at Obidos, to drive in all the enemy's posts on that side of the valley, and to turn his right to Roliça. It was at the same time directed to watch the motions of General Loison, of whose arrival at Rio Major, on the preceding night, intelligence had been obtained ; and in case he should come up, to engage him before he should have had an opportunity of communicating with Delaborde. The centre column again, which was composed of four brigades, namely, Major-general Hill's, Brigadier-general Crawford's, Brigadier-general Nightingale's, and Brigadier-general Fane's, together with four hundred Portuguese light infantry, the remainder of the British and Portuguese cavalry, a brigade of nine and a brigade of six-pounders, had it in charge to attack the enemy in front.

As the distance between Caldas and Roliça falls not short of three leagues, the morning was considerably advanced before the troops arrived within musket-shot of the French outposts. Nothing could exceed the orderly and gallant style in which they traversed the intervening space. The day chanced to be remarkably fine, and the scenery through which the columns passed was varied and striking ; but they were themselves by far the most striking feature in the whole panorama. Wherever any broken piece of ground or other

natural obstacle came in the way, the head of the column having passed it, would pause till the rear had recovered its order, and resumed its station ; and then the whole would press forward with the same attention to distances, and the same orderly silence, which are usually preserved at a review. At last, however, the enemy's line became visible, and in a few minutes afterwards the skirmishers were engaged. The centre division now broke into different columns of battalions ; that on the left pressed on with a quick pace, whilst the riflemen on the right drove in, with great gallantry and in rapid style, the tirailleurs who were opposed to them. At this moment General Ferguson's column was seen descending the hills, and moving rapidly in a direction to cut off the enemy's retreat. But Delaborde was not so incautious as to permit that. The posts which covered his position on the plain being all carried, he lost no time in abandoning it, and withdrew his troops, in excellent order, and with great celerity, into the passes. It was evident, indeed, that to the gorges of these passes he had all along looked, as furnishing him with the most advantageous battle-ground ; for he instantly assumed a new position there, and presented a front more formidable than ever, because more than ever protected by the inequalities of the ground from the approach of the assailants.

Under these circumstances, it became neces-

sary, in some degree, to alter the plan of attack. Five separate columns were now formed, to each of which was committed the task of carrying a pass ; but as the ground was peculiarly difficult, and the openings extremely narrow, no more than five British battalions, a few companies of British light infantry, and the brigade of Portuguese, could be brought into play. The following is the order in which this second assault was arranged :—

The Portuguese infantry were directed to move up a pass on the right of the whole line, through the pass next on the right to which the light companies of General Hill's brigade, supported by the 5th regiment, were commanded to penetrate. The office of forcing the third pass was committed to the 29th and 9th regiments ; the fourth became the province of the 45th regiment ; and the fifth fell to the lot of the 82nd. Than these passes, it is not easy to imagine any ground capable of presenting more serious obstacles to an assault, or more easy of a desperate defence. They were not only overhung on either hand by rocks and groves, among which skirmishers might lie secure, and do terrible execution with their fire ; but as the troops advanced, they came upon spaces rough with myrtles and other shrubs ; which unavoidably deranged their order, at the same time that they furnished admirable cover to the enemy. This was

particularly the case in that pass which the 29th and 9th regiments had been directed to carry ; and the enemy were not remiss in making the most of their advantages. Having permitted the column to go on, almost unmolested, till the leading companies were within a few yards of the myrtle grove, the French suddenly opened a fire, both from the front and flanks, which nothing but the most determined bravery on the part of the British troops could have resisted. As may be imagined, the advance of the column was for a moment checked ; but it was only for a moment. Colonel Lake, who led the attack, waving his hat in his hand, called on the men to follow ; they answered the call with a spirit-stirring cheer, and dashed on. But the enemy were full of confidence in themselves and in their position, and they disputed every inch of ground ; nor was it till after a considerable loss had been sustained, including the gallant officer who had so far conducted them to victory, that the 29th succeeded in crowning the plateau.

They were not yet formed in line, and the 9th was still entangled in the pass, when a French battalion advanced boldly to charge them. The enemy were met with the same spirit which they themselves exhibited, and the slaughter was very great on both sides ; but the charge was repulsed. It was renewed in a few minutes after by increased numbers ; for the columns which

were ascending the other passes being far in the rear, the French were enabled to bring the great mass of their force to bear upon this point; but the gallant 9th was now at hand to aid their comrades; and the enemy were again driven back with much slaughter. Nor was an opportunity afforded them of repeating their efforts; for the heads of different columns began to show themselves, and the position was carried at all points. The enemy accordingly drew off his troops, and began to retire, though in excellent order. Several efforts were made to harass him as he fell back, as well by the light infantry as by the cavalry; but his superiority in the latter arm, as well as the nature of the country, rendered these of little avail. He made good his retreat, leaving behind him three pieces of cannon, and about a thousand men, in killed, wounded, and missing.

Sir Arthur Wellesley having followed the enemy as far as Villa Verde, on the road to Torres Vedras, halted for the night. On the following morning the pursuit was about to be renewed, and it seemed as if no check would be given to the ardour of the troops, till they should have won a second victory, and established themselves in Lisbon, when the arrival of a messenger at headquarters caused a suspension of the orders already issued. This person was the bearer of despatches from Brigadier-general Anstruther, who, with a

large fleet of store-ships, and a reinforcement of troops, was now at anchor off the town of Peniche. As it was no doubt a matter of the first importance to bring these reinforcements into the line without delay, Sir Arthur resolved to move in such a direction as would at once insure their landing, and facilitate their ready junction with his corps. With this view he directed the head of his column towards Lourinho, which place he reached that evening, and on the following day took up a position near the village of Vimiero.

The point at which General Anstruther's brigade was directed to land, was on a sandy beach at the mouth of the Maceira. There the disembarkation accordingly took place, but amidst difficulties of no ordinary nature; for the surf ran tremendously high; and flying bodies of the enemy's cavalry hovered about, as if with the design of cutting off each detachment as it stepped on shore. The skill and perseverance of the seamen, however, triumphed over the former of these dangers; one or two boats only being swamped, and about half a dozen men losing their lives; and against the latter, the vigilance and good order of the troops themselves offered defence enough. The whole were got on shore at an early hour on the 20th; and noon had barely passed when they took their station along with part of General Spencer's brigade, in the advance.

On the very day which saw this division join his army, it was announced to Sir Arthur Wellesley that General Aucland was in the offing ; and before dark, Sir Harry Burrard arrived in Maceira Roads. Sir Arthur lost no time in opening a communication with that officer. He went on board of the frigate in which he was embarked the same night, laid before him a statement of affairs as they then stood, and entered into a minute detail of the plans which he had himself formed, and which he was already prepared to carry into effect. He represented to him the wisdom of resuming the offensive, whilst the British troops were yet flushed with their recent victory, and the enemy distracted and disheartened ; and he proposed to move on the following morning to occupy Mafra, and to turn the position which he understood that the French had taken up along the heights of Torres Vedras. Whatever were really the objections to a plan so bold, and yet so judicious, Sir Harry Burrard saw many. He urged, in the first place, that since Sir John Moore's corps might be reasonably expected on the coast in the course of a few days at the furthest, it would be more prudent to remain quietly where they were till it should have actually arrived ; in the next place, that the army was sadly in want of cavalry, and that the horses which dragged the guns were represented as being of the worst description. Then again there was a risk of losing

their supplies, in case they should diverge far from the shipping. It was in vain that Sir Arthur pointed out, in reply to all this, the impossibility of remaining quiet; because, if they did not advance to attack the enemy, the enemy would surely advance to attack them. It was in vain that he represented the great advantage which would arise, were Sir John Moore's corps to land in the Mondego, and march upon Santarem, thus cutting off the enemy's retreat both by Almeida and Elvas. Sir Harry Burrard's mind was made up. He would sanction no rash movement with a force as yet incomplete in every one of its branches; and as the senior officer, his will could not be disputed. Sir Arthur returned to the camp that night, and the very next day gave ample proofs that he had not erred in one, at least, of his anticipations.

Whilst Delaborde was executing the orders which he had received, and watching and retarding the progress of the English in a style worthy of his well-earned reputation, Junot was straining every nerve to bring into the field a force capable of sustaining, with some prospect of success, a general action with the British army. With this view, the garrisons of Lisbon, and of the forts in its neighbourhood, were drained of every man whom it was deemed prudent to withdraw; and the corps of Loison, Thomieres, and Kellerman, and

latterly of Delaborde himself, received orders to concentrate, without delay, in the position of Torres Vedras. The concentration took place during the 18th and 19th, and on the 20th the army was arranged into divisions and brigades. Of the former there were two ; one of which was given to Delaborde, the other to Loison ; whilst Kellerman took charge of the reserve, composed entirely of grenadiers.

These arrangements being complete, Junot immediately advanced towards Vimiero, where he had heard that the British army was encamped. The village of Vimiero stands in the midst of a beautiful valley, through which the Maceira flows, at the distance of about three miles, or something less, from the sea. On either side the hills rise to a considerable altitude, particularly towards the north, where a chain of detached heights rear themselves, with striking abruptness, out of the plain. Over the ridges of these runs the high-road, through the hamlets of Fontanel and Ventoza to Lourinho ; and on the eastern side is a deep ravine, at the bottom of which stands the village of Toledo. On the north-east of Vimiero, again, there is a sort of table-land, covered in part with shrubs, and in part bare, which commands all the approaches from the side of Torres Vedras ; and which is itself commanded in rear, and towards the west, by a mass of mountains that occupy the

whole space between the left bank of the Maceira and the sea. Such was the nature of the ground along which the British army now lay in bivouac ; its arrangements in detail were these :—

The greater part of the infantry, including the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 8th brigades, with eight pieces of artillery, were posted upon the mass of mountains just described ; on the south-eastern hill, again, or table-land, Brigadier-general Fane and Brigadier-general Anstruther took their stations ; the former with his riflemen and the 50th regiment, the latter with his whole brigade ; and they were supported by half a brigade of nine-pounders and half a brigade of sixes, which had been sent to them during the night. The high road to Lourinho, however, and the heights which it crosses, can hardly be said to have been occupied at all, only a single picket keeping guard there ; because no water being in the neighbourhood, and Sir Arthur not intending to continue on his ground longer than till daylight should enable him to quit it, he did not esteem it necessary to place any number of troops in a situation where so many inconveniences must attend them. But the village itself was fully occupied ; the reserve, both of artillery and cavalry, being stationed there.

Marshal Junot quitted his position at Torres Vedras soon after nightfall on the 20th ; and hav-

ing executed a tedious and difficult march, through narrow defiles, arrived, about seven o'clock in the morning, within a league and a half of the British outposts. The ground which he occupied was, however, completely hidden from the view of the English. He was accordingly enabled to form his columns of attack unseen ; nor was it till a considerable mass of cavalry had deployed immediately in front of the picket which observed the Lourinho road, that on the part of Sir Arthur Wellesley an action was anticipated. But Sir Arthur, who was never taken by surprise, perceived in a moment that the principal attack would be directed where he had most cause to apprehend it, and where his line was most unquestionably the weakest : he ordered the brigades of Generals Ferguson, Nightingale, Aucland, and Bowes, successively to cross the ravine, and long before the first shot had been fired at the outposts, his left was secure.

The enemy came on in two powerful columns, supported and flanked by weaker bodies ; the right, which consisted of about six thousand men, moving upon the Lourinho road ; the left, of about five thousand, directing its efforts against the table land. The first onset of both was, as the first onset of French troops always is, extremely impetuous ; insomuch that, on the left of the table land, the skirmishers were fairly driven in, and

the head of the advancing column presented itself, almost without a check, in front of the 50th regiment. The 50th, which was drawn up in line, permitted the enemy to approach till scarcely twenty yards divided them; and then pouring in a well-directed volley, made ready to charge. The enemy stood, for a moment, as if determined to await the shock; but the bayonets of the British corps were hardly crossed, when they began to waver; and before the rush was made, they broke and fled. Almost at the same instant, the 2nd battalion of the 43rd found itself vigorously attacked in the town of Vimiero by a lesser column, which flanked the greater. The 43rd had thrown part of its body into the church-yard, whilst part filled the houses, and covered the road which led to it; and it firmly met and bravely repelled every effort which was made to dislodge it. A similar result attended the attack which took place upon the extreme left of the British line, which was conducted with conspicuous gallantry by General Delaborde. It was repelled with immense slaughter, chiefly by the exertions of the 97th and 52nd regiments.

In the mean while a tremendous contest was going on among the hills, on the British right, and in the direction of the Lourinho road. The enemy forced their way in this quarter as they had done on the other flank, through the body of skirmishers

which covered the British line ; nor did they make the slightest pause, till they beheld the 36th, the 40th, and 71st regiments in close array before them. Their line was likewise formed in a moment ; and several terrible discharges of musketry were exchanged at a distance which hardly allowed of a single bullet passing wide of its mark. At length, the 82nd and 29th regiments came up to the support of their comrades, and the word was given to charge. One cheer, loud, regular, and appalling, warned the French of what they had to expect ; but the French were men of tried valour, and they stood to the last. That was a tremendous onset. The entire front rank of the enemy perished ; and the men who composed it were found, at the close of the action, lying on the very spots where each, during its continuance, had stood. Instantly the line gave way ; and being pursued with great impetuosity, six pieces of cannon were captured on the field. An attempt was, indeed, made to recover these, at a moment when the 71st and 82nd, who had halted in the valley, were lying down to rest after their labours ; but it was made to no purpose. These regiments only fell back to a little rising ground, from whence their fire could be given with greater effect ; they gave it, and once more bringing the bayonet into play, carried every thing before them.

The French fought well in this action. They

fought like men who had been accustomed to conquer, and had not yet learned to suffer defeat. The grenadiers of their reserve, in particular, performed prodigies of valour, advancing under a cross fire of musketry and cannon, and never giving way till the bayonets of the British troops drove them down the descent. But they were routed at all points, and that with a slaughter far greater than usually occurs to armies of a similar magnitude. Out of twelve or thirteen thousand men whom they brought into the field, three or four thousand fell; besides a large proportion of prisoners, of whom several were officers of rank. On the side of the British, the total loss amounted to 783, in killed, wounded, and missing; among the former of whom was Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, commanding the 20th light dragoons. He was shot through the heart whilst leading a brilliant charge which his detachment made; and in which, after committing terrible havoc among the enemy's infantry, it suddenly found itself beset by a whole brigade of French cavalry.

The battle had hardly begun, when Sir Harry Burrard, followed by his staff, arrived upon the field. Sir Arthur Wellesley, as a matter of course, proposed to resign to him all further responsibility; but Sir Harry possessed too much judgment not to perceive that the execution of plans could not be left in safer hands than in