

communication between different portions of our army; for the first flood would close up the passage entirely, by rendering the ford for a time quite impervious. A bridge upon tressels was accordingly directed to be formed, and put down at a convenient point; whilst five Spanish boats, with four pontoons, then in store at Elvas, were converted into rafts, to be used, when circumstances should require, as flying bridges.

It is not necessary to enter at much length into the various obstacles which the army was compelled to surmount, before it succeeded in effecting its passage across the Guadiana. Having carried in its train no pontoons or other materials for bridge-making, it was reduced to the necessity of depending upon such supplies as the country round, and the inefficient magazine at Elvas, were enabled to furnish; and these proved so inadequate, that several heavy showers causing the waters to rise on the very morning after the tressel-bridge had been completed, the whole was swept away, and the labour of several anxious days annihilated. It was at length determined not to wait any longer, but to pass the troops at once upon the rafts; and after they should have taken up their ground of investment, to erect another bridge at their leisure. The resolution was promptly carried into effect. During the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th, the troops were ferried

across in detachments as numerous as were at all consistent with their personal safety ; and on the latter day, Marshal Beresford established his head-quarters at a small village on the left bank of the river. He had hardly done so, when an attack was made upon the village, which so far succeeded, that the cavalry picket stationed there was surprised and destroyed ; but a company of infantry, which were in reserve to support them, came up, and the enemy were finally driven out with some loss.

Before these arrangements could be accomplished, the enemy were enabled to fill in their trenches, to rebuild the breaches, and to throw considerable stores of provisions and ammunition into Badajoz. This done, Mortier returned towards Seville ; but he endeavoured to cast an additional impediment in the way of our projected siege, by placing a garrison of four hundred men in Olivença. The numbers thus shut up, though neither adequate to make a proper defence, nor very formidable when considered as a post upon our flank, were not altogether to be neglected ; and Marshal Beresford accordingly resolved to commence his operations, by making himself master of Olivença.

The care of conducting this attack was intrusted to General Cole, who sat down before the place on the 11th. On the 15th, the batteries

being in readiness to open, the Governor was summoned, and honourable terms offered, in case he should be disposed to capitulate; but as these were rejected, the firing began, and before noon a practicable breach was effected. The Governor now, in his turn, proposed terms of capitulation, but was refused. The firing was resumed, and in half an hour the place surrendered at discretion. General Cole then hastened to join Marshal Beresford, who, having established a bridge of casks over the ford at Juramenha, and secured it by a tête-de-pont, capable of containing fifteen hundred men, was now in position at St. Martha. Here the corps established itself; and from this point the different objects were attended to, of our completing the investment of Badajoz; of alarming General Latour Maubourg into a further retrogression; and of watching the motions of Soult, who was using his best endeavours to open a communication with the city.

Things were in this state, when, on the 20th of April, Lord Wellington arrived from the north, and gave directions for the immediate commencement of active operations against Badajoz. The great difficulty, however, was to fall upon some such plan of attack, as might hold out a promise of speedy success, and at the same time should not require the employment of great means in its execution. It was a matter of the first consequence to

reduce Badajoz quickly; because, if a greater space of time were allowed than sixteen days of open trenches, besides the period requisite in preparing materials, our information assured us that Soult would be able to collect a sufficient force to relieve it. On the other hand, seldom has a siege been undertaken, in modern times, with resources less adequate to the design, either in intrenching tools, ammunition, or guns. Lord Wellington had, it is true, ordered an ample supply of everything requisite to be forwarded from Lisbon; and an ample supply of everything requisite was actually prepared; but when the stores began to be put in motion, it was found that means of transport were wanting; and hence not one-tenth part of the materiel promised ever reached the camp of the besieging army. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, our engineers set steadily to the operation of reducing the place; and the preliminary steps to the breaking of ground before the Pardaleras, the Castle, and Fort Christoval, were taken so early as the 22nd of April.

Before, however, any use could be made of these preparatory arrangements, a despatch from Sir Brent Spencer summoned Lord Wellington to his original station on the northern frontier. Having drawn out directions for the future conduct of the besieging force, and recommended to Marshal Beresford, in case of any attempt on the part of

Marshal Soult, to risk an action, Lord Wellington departed from the Guadiana, and arrived at the position in the vicinity of Almeida, just in time to meet the danger with which his troops were there menaced. It will be necessary here to describe somewhat at large the situation in which our army at this time stood, on the banks of the Agueda; and as I happen to be enabled, from personal observation, to enter upon my task, I do so with greater readiness than if, as in the earlier pages of the present chapter, I were obliged to write from the statements and observations of others.

Between the Duas Casas and Touron rivers, there extends a range of heights, which formed, on the present occasion, the main feature in our position. Our right, though placed directly upon Nava d'Avel, might be said, in strictness, to rest upon the Coa; for the country between the Coa and the village being extremely impracticable, little danger was to be apprehended from any attempt made in that quarter. Our centre extended along the heights just alluded to, between the villages of Fuentes de Honor and Villa Formosa; whilst our left, which embraced Fort Conception and Valdelamula, circled round by Almeida, so as to complete the blockade of that important place, at the same time that it appuyed upon ground extremely favourable. With respect to the arrangement of the troops, a few words will suffice.

On the extreme right of the line, General Houston, with the seventh division, took post; the cavalry being formed next to him, though somewhat in advance. After the seventh came the first division, thrown considerably forward, and upon very advantageous ground, and communicating on its left with the third, which again held connexion with the light, as it did with the sixth and fifth. The fifth division, under Sir William Erskine, formed the extreme left of the line; whilst the blockade of Almeida was, in an especial manner, committed to the sixth division, under General Campbell. Every division and brigade was, however, in a situation to move at a moment's warning, and by short and direct paths, to any post in the entire line which might be threatened; and hence, though to external appearance our flanks were far removed from one another, the space of three hours would have brought the most distant battalions in position to the same ground, at any given point. Such was the local state of our army, from the day when Massena retreated across the frontier, up to the end of April; and such it continued to be, when Lord Wellington, after having examined the condition of affairs in the south, returned to direct the series of operations which were impending.

When Massena finally withdrew from the Portuguese territory, it was confidently anticipated

that he would scarcely be in a condition to resume offensive operations for several months to come. Rumours of his excessive unpopularity began also to make their way within our camp. We were told a variety of tales touching a quarrel which had occurred between the Prince of Esling and Marshal Ney, into which, it was added, that the whole army had entered, with a decided leaning towards the latter officer; and it was repeatedly rumoured that Massena was on the eve of his recall, and that some new chief would shortly appear upon the stage to supply his place. Whether these reports were well or ill founded, we hardly cared to inquire; but we continued to preserve an attitude of extreme watchfulness towards the front, at the same time that the blockade of Almeida was kept up with all the diligence and vigour of which we were capable. With respect, again, to the enemy's position, we were not so well informed. We were aware that they occupied Ciudad Rodrigo and the country round in force, whilst their outposts extended along the Agueda, and their patrols occasionally passed it; but whether they had sent any of their divisions to the towns in the rear, as some of our communications asserted, we possessed no means of accurately ascertaining. The first days of May, however, brought in a tolerably explicit declaration of the enemy's designs; and we found that any notions which we might

have been led to form, as to the disorganisation and consequent inefficiency of Massena's army, were quite as groundless as many other reports which daily poured in upon us.

I have said that the centre of our line extended at this time along the heights between the villages of Fuentes de Honor and Villa Formosa; a few words more respecting the localities of the former of these villages may not be amiss.

Fuentes de Honor was not, strictly speaking, embraced in our position, and though occupied by the light troops of the 1st and 3rd divisions supported by the 7th regiment, it was held merely as an advanced post. Yet, in spite of its advanced situation, it possessed so many defensible features, as to form, in point of fact, one of the main bulwarks of our ground; and its strength came fairly into trial on two separate occasions, at the period to which I now refer. On both was the judgment which directed its selection distinctly shown; and therefore I will endeavour to detail its particular features and bearings.

Fuentes de Honor stands at the bottom of a valley, and on the bank of a small rivulet or brook. On either side are rising grounds; and through it passes the main road to Caseja, Gallegos, and from thence to Ciudad Rodrigo. On the Ciudad Rodrigo side, an extensive morass is bounded at some distance by a thick wood; and though the ground

certainly rises there, as it does in rear of the village, still the troops which advance in a hostile attitude from that quarter, must pass over a considerable tract, where they will be exposed to a heavy and destructive fire from almost every point. The village itself is crossed in various directions by walls, which afforded excellent cover for infantry, and were not altogether profitless against artillery; whilst in its rear arise some rocky heights, which at once covered the troops whilst in possession of the place, and afforded them a safe place of retreat, in case they should be driven out. Above these rocky heights was our main line arrayed; from whence, in case of need, reinforcements could be continually sent to the troops in the village; whilst, in the event of the village itself being carried, the conquerors would find that their labours, so far from being completed, were only beginning. To sum up all in few words;—it would be extremely difficult to conceive a post so well adapted to give to its defenders a superiority quite unusual over any force which might attack them; so easy of defence from its local situation; so secure, in point of retreat; and withal so extremely important to the line which it was designed to cover; as furnishing an arena of contest quite distinct from the main position, and totally independent of it. This post, as I have already stated, was held by the light troops of the third and first divi-

sions; and it became, as soon as Massena found himself in a condition to renew hostilities, the theatre of operations, hardly less sanguinary, or less glorious, than the hills of Busaco, or the plains of Talavera.

Before I proceed, however, to give any account of the operations which may be said to have marked the opening of another campaign, it may not perhaps be amiss if I offer a few remarks, in addition to those already recorded, touching the present prospects of Lord Wellington's army, as compared with those which were before it at the corresponding period in 1810.

In the month of February, 1810, Lord Wellington formed himself in position, on almost the same ground which he occupied now. His was then the only thing in the shape of an army throughout the Peninsula; for the Spanish corps had been all, one after another, overthrown; and there remained no force capable of keeping the field, except about twenty-seven thousand British, and an equal number of Portuguese troops. It unfortunately happened, also, that both the British and Portuguese were suffering dreadfully from sickness; whilst the latter, as is well known, never having as yet found an opportunity of proving themselves, could not, even if efficient in other respects, be perfectly relied upon. The enemy had just made themselves masters of Andalu-

sia, without being under the necessity of striking a blow ;—Cadiz was in a state of blockade ;—and Regnier and Mortier, threatening Portugal through the Alentejo, were but feebly opposed by a miserable levy under Romana. Massena, likewise, was around Ciudad Rodrigo with upwards of seventy thousand veterans ; and from the fortress, garrisoned only by Spaniards, and superintended by a Spanish governor, no very obstinate resistance was expected.

It is not, perhaps, going too far to affirm that few men, situated as Lord Wellington then was, would have regarded his case as other than desperate. He was opposed, with less than fifty thousand effectives, to the undivided strength of the French empire ; for there was no diversion going on in the north of Europe, nor any prospect of such diversion being speedily effected. It is true that the lines were in his rear, fortified as carefully and skilfully as time and circumstances would allow, and that his retreat thither could never be prevented ; but formidable as the lines were, no one ventured to pronounce them impregnable, especially if assailed by the whole of the French corps then in the Peninsula. The truth, indeed, is, that among the heads of departments, and throughout the army at large, there were at this time few, who did not look forward with something like anxiety to a speedy re-embarkation.

Portugal has no gates, it was said, by closing which thirty thousand British soldiers can pretend to shut out the French army; and to talk of defending it, now that Spain has been subdued, is as idle as it could be, to talk of defending the solitary province of Galicia, Andalusia, or Arragon. Embark we must, before long;—and happy shall we be, if our embarkation be not impeded or prevented. Such, however, were not the sentiments of our chief; and it must be so interesting to posterity to record what passed in his mind at the period I allude to, that I hesitate not to give his opinions, in nearly his own words, as communicated to myself:

“There is no doubt that the task which I have undertaken is Herculean, particularly now, that the Spanish armies are all annihilated, and that there is nothing in the shape of an army in the field but ourselves. I think I am, however, in such a situation, that I can retire and embark whenever I please; and if that be the case, the longer I stay, the better for the cause, and the more honourable to the country. Whether I shall be able to hold my ground at last, must of course depend upon the numbers and the means by which I shall be attacked; and adverting to the difficulties of subsistence even for small numbers in this country, I hope that I shall not be attacked by more than I shall be able to manage.

The necessity of keeping my rear open to the Tagus is a difficulty; and I should be able to effect my object with greater ease, if I was not under the necessity of effecting everything, not only without loss, but without risk or even the appearance of risk, in order to please the good people of England."

These are memorable sentiments, contrasted with those which, it must be admitted, were generally felt by the army. How well and how accurately all our commander's calculations had been formed, the turn which events took speedily demonstrated. The enemy advanced—they overcame the obstacles opposed to them—and we retired, as it had been previously arranged, to Torres Vedras. Here then, at the very extremity of the Peninsula, Lord Wellington took his stand; and here he remained till the results of his own profound combinations compelled the enemy to fall back into Spain.

How different was our situation now! Instead of acting solely on the defensive, we were engaged in two offensive operations at once, both of them of the very first importance. We had even ventured to divide our strength in the faces of those very corps which but a year ago threatened us with annihilation; and we were carrying on two sieges, and covering the divisions which conducted them, at the mouths of the two great roads which

touch upon the Portuguese frontier. Thus by the unbending firmness of one man, aided by the admirable discipline and courage of his troops, had the course of a war, of late so alarming, been arrested ; and the French, instead of overrunning Portugal, and bringing under their yoke the last portion of the continent of Europe, were held in check in a country where their superiority extended no further than over the spots of ground covered by their several bivouacs.

CHAPTER IV.

Battle of Fuentes de Honor—Re-investment of Almeida—The French garrison blow up the place, and escape—Massena's army retires into Spain, and Lord Wellington's into cantonments—Siege of Badajoz by Marshal Beresford—Is raised in consequence of the advance of Soult—Lord Wellington sends off reinforcements to Marshal Beresford, and sets out to join him—The Marshal's corps assemble in position at Valverde.

ON the 1st and 2nd of May, several large bodies of French troops were observed to pass the Agueda and the Azava, and to make a movement, as if with the design of threatening our communications, and, if possible, effecting the relief of the fortress of Almeida. Towards the evening of the 3rd, the sixth corps showed itself in three lines on the ridge which overhangs Fuentes de Honor, in a direction parallel to that occupied by us; and they shortly afterwards opened a heavy cannonade, which they followed up by a desperate

assault upon the village. Lieutenant-colonel Williams, who commanded a battalion of light companies, gallantly sustained the attack for some time; but it was found necessary, at last, to support him with the 71st, under Colonel Cadogan, as it again was supported in succession by the 79th and 24th regiments. The battle had not lasted long, when Colonel Williams received a wound, which compelled him to quit the field, and things were in some disorder; but at this moment Colonel Cadogan pressed forward with the 71st, and driving the enemy with the bayonet from all the ground which they had won, restored the fortune of the day. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the 71st were ably supported by the 79th and 24th; upon the senior officer among whom, Colonel Cameron of the former corps, the command of the whole devolved.

Though checked in their first advance, the enemy repeatedly renewed their attack, bringing up, on each occasion, fresh troops; and on every occasion were they driven back with a heroism which has never been surpassed, and but rarely equalled. They fought, however, with great gallantry, and more than once stood to be bayoneted by our soldiers in the main street of the village; but their success, whenever obtained, lasted but a moment, and they were instantly swept away by a desperate charge from the men whom they be-

lieved that they had overcome. The 71st, which had repeatedly attacked and overthrown columns of French troops on the road, were tempted, towards dusk, by the appearance of what they conceived to be a gun on the opposite acclivity, to rush across the rivulet, and become the assailants in their turn. Nothing could be more impetuous, and yet more orderly, than this charge. They literally bore down everything before them, till they reached the object of their search; when, to their mortification, they discovered that it was not a gun, but only a tumbril of ammunition. Of that, however, they made themselves masters; and though severely galled on their return by a murderous fire of musketry and grape, they regained Fuentes de Honor with their trophy, and spent the night there in quiet.

As may readily be imagined, the dawn of the 4th had not yet appeared, when the whole of our line got under arms, and waited in anxious expectation for a renewal of the combat. Day broke, however, without disclosing any disposition, on the part of the enemy, to resume the offensive; and as hour after hour stole on, a belief naturally arose, that nothing would be attempted, at least for the present. In this persuasion we were strongly confirmed by the report of several deserters, who this day came in to us, and from whom we learned that Massena, overawed by the

obstinacy of yesterday's resistance, had resolved to attempt nothing further, till he should be reinforced by a body of the imperial guard, which was understood to be on its march to join him. That the statements of the deserters were not to be disregarded, a variety of circumstances led us to believe. In the first place, clouds of mounted and staff officers might be seen, riding, from time to time, along the opposite ridge, and examining, with apparent care and minuteness, into our dispositions. In the next place, as evening approached, we observed no inconsiderable addition to the enemy's cavalry, particularly to their hus-sars and lancers, arrive. The reader need scarcely be reminded that our force was greatly weakened, more especially in cavalry, in consequence of the formation of the separate corps, which was now acting under Marshal Beresford. Of the latter description of troops we could not muster, at present, more than fifteen or sixteen hundred in the field; and the total amount of our effectives, including Portuguese of all arms, fell short of twenty-nine thousand. On the side of the enemy, again, the cavalry were computed to exceed four thousand; whilst the sum of the effectives fell not short of forty-five thousand. These were fearful odds, especially when it is considered that we were fighting for the attainment of one specific object, and that we were not only called upon to

resist with effect this tremendous superiority, but to continue, at the same time, the blockade of Almeida. Yet had the men confidence in their leader, as their leader had confidence in them ; and that feeling, aided by the judicious choice of ground, and the able manœuvres which our divisions severally executed, carried us safely and gloriously through all our difficulties.

At three o'clock in the morning of the 5th, our advanced parties sent in to state that the enemy's columns were in motion ; and before six they had commenced a desperate attack, as well upon the village of Fuentes de Honor as upon the 7th division, which occupied a wood and some broken ground on the right of our line. In Fuentes the assailants were met with the same spirit of determined resistance which had frustrated all their efforts on the 3rd ; and if for a moment they seemed to have made an impression, they were almost immediately afterwards driven with loss from the ground which they had won. On the right, affairs went on with rather more of apparent peril ; though even there the danger was never very imminent. It was here that they deemed it expedient to employ the mass of their cavalry, which came on, strongly supported both by infantry and guns ; and a severe loss was on our part experienced, before a final check was given to the progress of men who fought like troops

habituated to victory, and as yet unaccustomed to reverses.

The first attack fell upon General Sontag's brigade, which had been especially directed to defend the wood, but which, overwhelmed by numbers, retired, after a gallant and obstinate resistance. Our cavalry seeing this, and anxious to cover the retreat of their comrades, quitted a very commanding and yet open position on which they had been drawn up, and descended, with two or three pieces of horse-artillery, into the low ground. It was an unfortunate movement, and opened to the enemy the only prospect of permanent success which they enjoyed during the whole of the day; for they immediately occupied in force the heights which had been abandoned, and pressed our people so vigorously, that it was found necessary to give to this part of our line a new direction. The light division, which had advanced to support the cavalry, finding the post already evacuated, wheeled to the right, and made arrangements to protect a fresh movement of General Houston's division, which they executed in masterly style. They drew up in squares of battalions, received and repulsed repeated charges of the French cavalry, and then marching through our own squadrons, sustained a cannonade as galling as has frequently fallen to the share of troops in that dense order. In the mean while, no formidable force of British

dragoons could be brought together, for our inferiority in that arm was too decisive to warrant any grand display; but a few squadrons charged from time to time through the intervals of the squares with greater or less benefit, according as opportunities offered. In the end, however, this species of manœuvre threatened to be productive of more harm than good. Our troopers, in retiring, got among our own squares, and threw them into confusion, from which, but for the judicious conduct of the chasseurs Britanniques, much mischief might have accrued. These, however, by a well-directed flanking fire, hindered the enemy from taking advantage of the opening made, and hence our retrogression was effected with but little loss on our part, and a heavy slaughter among the French.

The right was now appuyed by a strong hill, on the summit of which stood an old tower; and the enemy finding that the new alignment had been taken up without the slightest disorder, paused before they ventured to assail it. Their successes here amounted to nothing more than the occupation of some ground, which, at the commencement of the action, had been held by us; they had in no respect broken our ranks, and they were as far from turning them as ever; whilst in the direction of Fuentes de Honor, upon which a variety of attempts had been made, they were beaten back

at all points. They had attacked it in front, and on both flanks, with infantry, artillery, and cavalry; but the steady valour of the 71st and 79th regiments, supported by the 24th, set all their efforts at defiance; and now, after several hours of severe fighting, not the slightest impression was made. Massena seemed to feel that our troops were made of more obstinate stuff than even he had anticipated, and towards evening he relaxed in his exertions. His columns on our right halted; those which had been employed in the assault of Fuentes drew off; and the whole army prepared to bivouac, in the order in which it stood at the close of the action. Similar arrangements were entered into on our side. The pickets were stationed along the front of the position; and large fires were lighted across the ridge; and both parties lay down to rest with a confident assurance on their minds that the battle was intermitted only till the return of daylight.

We were, as usual, under arms long before dawn appeared; but it brought about no such results as we had anticipated. The enemy were before us, indeed, in the same force as ever, and in the same attitude which they had assumed on the preceding evening; but they exhibited no disposition to renew the struggle; whilst we were content to retain our attitude of watchfulness, and to act as we had hitherto done, entirely on the de-

fensive. In this manner the whole of the 6th passed away, no movement of any importance being made on either side ; and night again closed in, bringing with it an increased persuasion, that the morrow must, at all events, lead to some more decisive issues. But those amongst us who anticipated another battle, found, on the return of day, that they had miscalculated the enemy's courage or resources. The dawn of the 8th showed their columns in full retreat ; and towards noon it was satisfactorily ascertained that they had taken the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Massena, with his whole army, reinforced by every battalion and squadron which he had been enabled to bring up from Castile and Galicia, was thus foiled by three divisions of our divided force ; he was compelled to retreat before men over whom he had calculated on obtaining an easy and brilliant victory ; and Almeida, for the relief of which he had shown himself deeply interested, was left to its fate. It may be worth while to inquire into some of those circumstances which tended to produce a failure so remarkable, and to place fresh laurels on the brows of one, to whose renown all Europe was already beginning to bear witness.

There can be no doubt that the general arrangement and disposition of the allied troops was marked by all that judgment and military sagacity, which so eminently characterise the tactics

of the Duke of Wellington. Every species of force, whether infantry, cavalry, or artillery, was posted where it could act to the best purpose and with greatest effect; whilst due advantage was taken of all the natural inequalities which presented themselves, to shelter our people, as far as might be, from the enemy's fire. Yet our line was in many places unavoidably exposed, and open to the attacks both of cavalry and artillery; whilst the thick woods in our front afforded to Massena the most convenient plateau which he could have desired, for the distribution of his columns unseen, and therefore disregarded. Had he rightly availed himself of this advantage, he might have poured the mass of his force upon any single point, and perhaps made an impression before we could have had time to support it. There were, besides this, other and equally obvious modes of proceeding, to which he had no recourse. Massena's superiority to us, both in cavalry and artillery, was very great. Had he commenced his attack with a violent cannonade, it must have produced some havoc, and probably considerable confusion in our line. He might then have moved forward his cavalry en masse, supporting it by strong columns of infantry; and had either the one or the other succeeded in piercing through, our situation would have been by no means an enviable one. It is, indeed, highly probable that his charges would have been

repulsed ; but in this case, a third resource was left to him, of which he might also have availed himself. Had he thrown his cavalry round our right flank,—a movement which we should have found it no easy matter to prevent,—crossed the Coa, advanced upon our lines of communication, and stopped our supplies, at the moment when, with his infantry, he threatened to turn us ; then pushed upon Sabugal and the places near, he might have compelled us to pass the Coa with all our artillery at the most disadvantageous places, and cut us off from our best and safest retreat. There was, indeed, a time during the continuance of the affair of the 5th, when his design of acting in this manner was seriously apprehended ; and Lord Wellington was, in consequence, reduced to the necessity of deciding whether he should relinquish the Sabugal road, or raise the blockade of Almeida. But Lord Wellington's presence of mind never for a moment forsook him. He felt no distrust in his troops ; to retain his hold over a secure and accessible line of retreat was, therefore, to him, a consideration of less moment than to continue an operation of which the ultimate success could be now neither doubtful nor remote ; and he at once determined to expose Sabugal, rather than throw open a communication with Almeida. It was a bold measure, but it was not adopted without due consideration ; and it received

an ample reward in the successful termination of this hard-fought battle.

The loss experienced by our army during the operations of these two days was very considerable; for the actions, although partial, were maintained with signal obstinacy on both sides. It fell chiefly upon the 1st, 3rd, and 7th divisions of infantry, and upon the cavalry, and amounted in all to nearly sixteen hundred men. That of the enemy was much greater, and came not short, on the most moderate computation, of three thousand. They left four hundred dead in the village of Fuentes de Honor alone, and a large proportion of prisoners fell into our hands. Notwithstanding all this, however, they retrograded so slowly, that on the 9th it was still doubtful whether some fresh efforts might not be made. They had taken, as I have stated, the road to Ciudad Rodrigo, and appeared about noon on the preceding day to be in full retreat; but their retreat was conducted with the utmost leisure, which the peculiarity of our circumstances would not permit us to interrupt. On the contrary, we applied ourselves sedulously to the double task of strengthening our own ground by means of intrenchments, and resuming the strict blockade of Almeida, in which late events had compelled us to relax; and on the 10th we were relieved from all further uneasiness respecting Massena, by the discovery that he had left no

more than a few cavalry pickets on the banks of the Azava. Thus was an end put to a variety of conjectures, which some had begun to hazard, touching the probabilities of another action in this quarter; and Lord Wellington was left at liberty to pursue such plans as he should consider best adapted to the situation of the country, and most suitable to his own means and resources.

In addition to giving security to his position above Fuentes de Honor, by directing certain field-works to be thrown up here and there for its defence, Lord Wellington issued orders that the blockade of Almeida should be resumed. On first arriving in this province, the British general caused Almeida to be reconnoitred, with the view, if possible, of carrying it by a coup-de-main. As, however, it was found too formidable for any such attempt, and as the army was not possessed of a battering train, or other materials necessary for the conduct of a regular siege, he was, per force, obliged to content himself with its investment; and confident hopes were entertained, that famine would, before long, do the work of war. It had now been blockaded some time, and its stock of provisions, originally scanty, was drawing, we were well aware, rapidly to an end; it was therefore of the utmost importance, not only to prevent fresh supplies from being thrown in, but to hinder the garrison from effecting its escape; a measure

which the governor was known to have in contemplation. On this account, Massena's columns had no sooner abandoned their ground, than the sixth division, on whom the duties of the blockade devolved, were commanded to resume their labours; and they marched for the purpose, under the orders of General Campbell, back upon their cantonments.

General Campbell, a zealous and enterprising officer, was exceedingly desirous that the arrangement of the blockade should be intrusted entirely to himself; and being ambitious, as it was but natural that he should, of the honour of reducing this important place through his own skill, he requested and obtained permission to conduct all details without any interference. Whether it was, that General Campbell felt too confident, or, whether any other circumstances had weight with him, I know not; but the event proved that, in making his dispositions, he adopted a system of incaution, which led to results mortifying to himself, and annoying to the whole army. Instead of covering with troops the left face of Almeida, the banks of the Agueda, and the bridge at Barba del Puerco, these points remained unguarded; and he posted a brigade at Junça and Malparteda, threw back General Pack to Cinco Velhas, and watched, with a degree of attention, the right face of the town, from which no movement was likely to be made