the deep trench as through a ditch, and was thus the first man who reached the streets of the town from the main breach. The appearance of his group of redcoats in the streets, the men of the Light Division coming up at the same moment, made the French yield the breach.

When the summit of the breach was gained, it was found to be so deeply entrenched that, to quote Jones, the stormers "had to jump down a wall 16 feet in depth, at the foot of which had been ranged a variety of impediments, such as iron crows' feet, iron *chevaux-de-frise*, iron spikes fixed vertically, the whole being encircled with the means of maintaining a barrier of burning combustibles." The parapet was gapped with two lateral trenches. They were ten feet deep and ten feet wide, but, by accident, a plank the besieged had used for the purpose of crossing one of these trenches was left, with one end at the bottom of the ditch, the other resting on the lip of the trench next to the breach. This was promptly dragged up, thrust across the trench, and used as a bridge. Across the second trench the stormers also found a single plank left, and Campbell led the rush over it. While he was on the plank a French officer calling on his men to fire, sprang forward, and made a lunge at Campbell. Campbell parried, and in a moment was across the ditch. So swift, so fierce was the impetus of the attack that, to quote the words of an actor in the

strife, "Five minutes had not elapsed from the regiments quitting the shade of the convent wall before a lodgment was made in the town, and the majority of the garrison had thrown down their arms—many never having had time to take them."

At the smaller breach a fight as gallant was raging. Wellington was in the act of giving his final instructions to George Napier, who was to lead the storming party of the Light Division against this breach, when the men of the 3rd, anticipating the signal, leaped out, and the assault on the great breach began in the manner described. Napier has left a graphic record of the doings of that night. He had been allowed to select his own storming party, and, halting the three regiments which formed the Light Division, as they were on their way to relieve the trenches, he called for 100 volunteers from each regiment. The entire division instantly stepped forward, and the trouble was to select 300 stormers out of 1500 soldiers, all claiming that perilous honour. Napier himself, with an odd premonition of what would happen, arranged with a surgical friend to be on hand during the assault for the purpose of amputating his arm, as he was sure he would lose it; a service which was duly rendered. With cool judgment Napier forbade his men to load; they must win the breach with the bayonet. While Wellington himself was pointing out the breach to Napier, a staff officer discovered the unloaded condition of the muskets in

the storming party, and demanded "Why don't you make your men load?" "If we don't do the business with the bayonet without firing," answered Napier, "we shall not do it at all; so I shall not load;" and, says Napier, "I heard Wellington, who was close by, say, 'Let him alone; let him go his own way.'"

Napier believed in silence as well as in steel. He sternly forbade his men to shout, and swiftly, but without a sound, the stormers of the Light Division doubled forward. The ditch, 300 yards distant, was reached, and, in spite of its depth and blackness, crossed without a pause. The stormers clambered up its farther face, and raced up the breach, the French firing fast on them. A grape-shot smashed Napier's arm, whirling his body round with the impact of the blow, and he fell. At the fall of their leader the stormers stopped for a moment, lifted their muskets, forgetting they were empty, towards the gap above, and then came the sound of 300 muskets all idly snapped at once! "Push on with the bayonet, men!" shouted Napier. The men broke into a deep-voiced hurrah, ran forward again, their front narrowed to a couple of files. They had to climb, with stumbling feet, to the very muzzles of the steadily-firing French; but nothing could stop the men of the Light Division. A 24-pounder was placed across the actual gap in the ramparts to bar it; but the stormers leaped over it, the column followed. The 13th, according to orders, wheeled to

the right, so as to take the defenders of the great breach, where the fight was still raging, in flank, the 52nd cleared the ramparts to the left, and Ciudad Rodrigo was won, the governor surrendering his sword to the youthful lieutenant who led the stormers of the Light Division.

Then followed wild scenes. The men were mad with the passion of the fight and the exultation of victory. There was keen hatred of the Spanish in the British ranks. They had not forgotten the sufferings of the Talavera campaign, and how their wounded were allowed to starve to death, or were abandoned to the French by the Spaniards after that battle. Ciudad Rodrigo was practically sacked by British soldiers, for the moment broken loose from all restraint, and these excesses blacken the fame of the great siege.

The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo cost Wellington nearly 1300 men and officers, of whom one half fell on the breaches on the night of the assault. Craufurd, the stern and famous leader of the Light Division, was struck down at the head of his men. The storming-party stood formed under the wall, and Craufurd, who led them in person, turned, faced the cluster of desperate spirits he was to lead, and spoke a few words to them. His voice had always a singular carrying note; but on this occasion the men noticed an unusual depth and range in its tones. He was speaking his last words! "Now,

lads, for the breach!" he added, and moved quickly forward. Craufurd himself, with unfaltering step, advanced straight to the crest of the glacis; then, turning, with his keen high voice he shouted instructions to the shot-tormented column of the stormers. He himself stood, a solitary figure, the centre of a furious storm of musketry fire. From the rampart, almost within touch, a double rank of French infantry was shooting fiercely and fast. Presently a bullet struck Craufurd on the side, tore through his lungs and lodged near the spine. It was a mortal wound, and, as his aide-de-camp, Shaw Kennedy, stooped over him, the dying soldier charged him with a last message to his wife. He was quite sure, she was to be told, that they would meet in heaven!

He was buried in the breach his men had carried—a fitting sepulchre for so stern a soldier.

Gleig has left a striking picture of the scene at Craufurd's funeral. His body was borne by six sergeants of the Light Division, with Wellington, Beresford, and a cluster of general officers as mourners. The coffin was carried up the rugged breach itself, a rough grave having been dug in its stony heart for the gallant soldier who died upon it. When the coffin was laid on the edge of this strange grave, Gleig says that he saw the tears running down the stern faces of the rugged veterans of the Light Division as they stood in silent ranks around.

Craufurd had his limitations as a soldier. He was stern, fierce, passionate, and of a valour which always scorned, and sometimes fatally violated, prudence. It is of Craufurd's obstinate valour in the fight—a valour that made him so fiercely reluctant to fall back in the presence of any odds—that a familiar story is told. Wellington, when Craufurd at last came up, said, "I am glad to see you safe, Craufurd." "Oh!" responded Craufurd coolly, "I was in no danger, I assure you." "But I was from your conduct," replied Wellington. Upon which Craufurd observed in an audible aside, "He is —— crusty to-day!"

It was Craufurd again—not Picton—who told a remiss commissary that if provisions for his regiment were not up in time he would hang him! The aggrieved commissary complained to Wellington. "Did General Craufurd go as far as that?" said Wellington, "did he actually say he would hang you?" "Yes, my lord, he did," replied the almost tearful commissary. "Then," was Wellington's unexpected comment, "I should strongly advise you to get the rations ready; for if General Craufurd said he would hang you, by G— he will do it!"

Mackinnon, who commanded a brigade of Picton's division, was slain on the great breach. He was a leader greatly beloved by his Highlanders. There was in him a touch of the high-minded chivalry of Sir Philip Sidney added to the fire of Scottish

valour. He, too, found at first a grave in the rugged and bloody slope where he fell; but the officers of the Coldstream Guards afterwards laid him in a statelier, but not a nobler, grave at Espega.

It is curious to note that after the capture of Rodrigo a number of British deserters—ten from the Light Division alone—were found in the garrison. They had fought desperately against their countrymen in that wild night of the assault. Most of them were shot, after trial by court-martial.

The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo is a memorable stage in the fortunes of the Peninsular War. It marks the beginning of that chain of almost unbroken victories which stretches to Waterloo. Wellington had accomplished with 40,000 men in twelve days, and in the depth of winter, what took Massena in 1810, with 80,000 men, and in the height of summer, more than a month to accomplish. "Whether viewed in its conception, arrangements, or execution," the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, says Jones, in his "Journal of Sieges," "must be ranked as one of the happiest, boldest, and most creditable achievements in our military annals." Perhaps the best testimony to the splendour of the deed is found in the astonished explanations of it offered by the French. On January 16 Marmont announced he was about to set out with 60,000 men to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo. "You may expect events," he added, "as fortunate and as glorious for the French

army." But on the 19th Ciudad had fallen. "There is something so incomprehensible in this," he wrote to the Emperor, "that I allow myself no observation!" Napoleon, on his part, allowed himself a good many "observations" on the event, and of a kind very unsatisfactory to the generals to whom they were addressed!

On the morning after the assault Picton came up to the 88th as it was falling into line. A soldier shouted to him as the grim-faced Picton rode by, "General, we gave you a cheer last night; it's your turn now." Picton took off his hat with a laugh, and said, "Here, then, you drunken set of brave rascals! Hurrah! we'll soon be at Badajos!" The men shouted and slung their firelocks: the band broke into music, and, with a quick step, the regiment moved off to the yet wilder and more desperate assault on the castle at Badajos.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TALE OF BADAJOS

AFTER the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo Marmont drew back to Valladolid to wait for Wellington's next move. The British general handed the captured city over to the Spaniards, by whose careless hands it was perilously neglected, and himself returned to Gallegos, there to mature his plans for a rush on Badajos. The French marshals, fluttered by Wellington's bold stroke, were keenly on the alert; and Marmont, to do him justice, suspected that Badajos would next be attacked. Napoleon, however, laughed at the idea. "You must suppose the English mad," he wrote, "to imagine they will march on Badajos leaving you at Salamanca; that is leaving you in a situation to get to Lisbon before them." Yet it was exactly this heroic "madness" which Wellington contemplated. He resolved to invest the place during the second week in March, when the flooded rivers would make it difficult for the French columns to concentrate for its relief. Meanwhile he covered his preparations with a mask of profoundest secrecy.

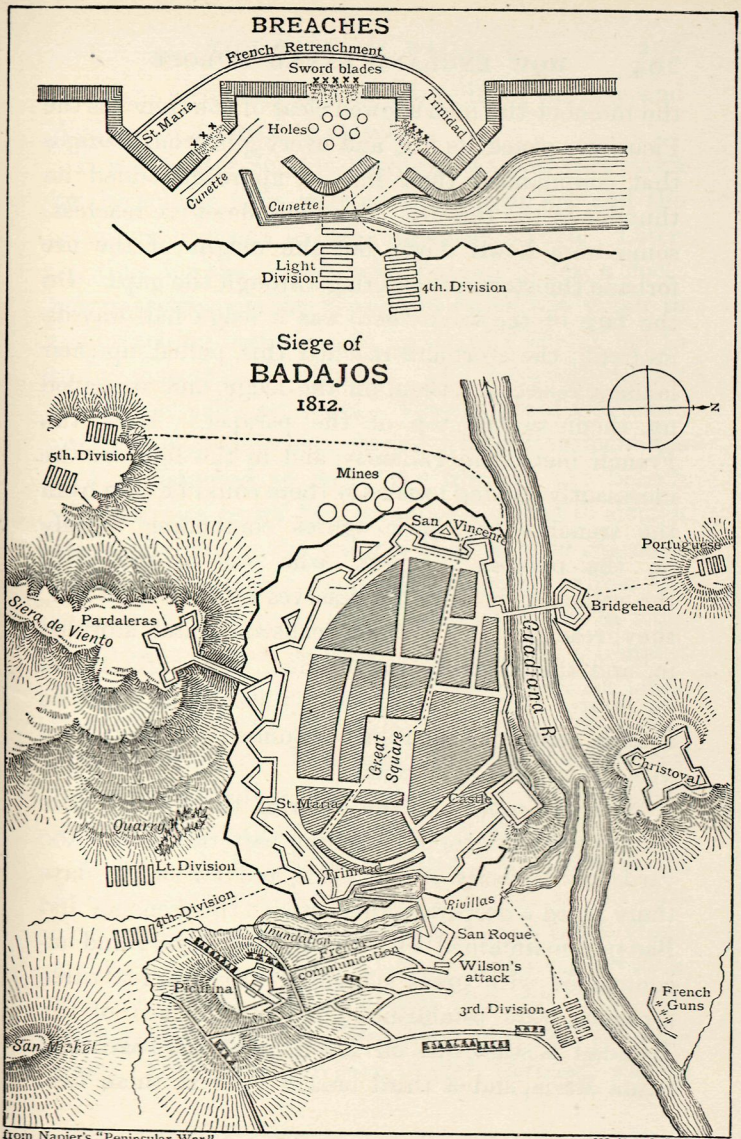
The guns for the siege were shipped at Lisbon

for a fictitious destination, transhipped at sea into small craft, in which they were carried up the river Sadao, thence by bullock-trains through unfrequented routes to Badajos. The hunger-wasted bullocks, however, proved unequal to the task of dragging all the guns to the front, and the siege train was hopelessly inadequate. Some light guns were borrowed from the fleet, and stray pieces picked up in various quarters, making the most composite and utterly inadequate artillery train with which a great siege was ever undertaken. It included Spanish guns as old as the Armada, others that were cast in the reign of Philip III.; yet others in that of John IV. of Portugal. Wellington had to pay in the blood of his soldiers for the defects in his battering equipment. Badajos was commanded by Philippon, a soldier of high daring and of exhaustless artifice; its garrison, 5000 strong, was made up of detachments from the forces of Marmont, of Soult, and of Jourdan, so that the honour of three armies was pledged to its succour. Wellington employed the 3rd, the 4th, and the Light Divisions, and a brigade of Portuguese in the siege; Hill and Graham commanded the covering force.

Badajos stands on a rocky ridge, a spur of the Toledo range, just where the Rivillas runs almost at right angles into the Guadiana, and in the angle formed by their junction. The city is oval in shape, ringed with strong works, the Rivillas serving as a wet ditch to its east front, the Guadiana, 500 yards

wide, forbidding attack from the north; five great fortified outposts—St. Roque, Christoval, Picurina, Sardelifas, and a fortified bridge-head across the Guadiana, constituting the outer zone of its defences. The equinoctial rains were falling on Badajos when the siege began. The rivers were in flood; the ground was little better than a marsh; tempests were perpetually blowing. Yet, from the moment the siege began, the thunder of the attack never ceased. Wellington attacked the city at its south-eastern angle, where a curve of the Rivillas acted as a gigantic wet ditch. Here the Picurina, a formidable redoubt, with a ditch fourteen feet deep, and a rampart sixteen feet high, served as an outpost to the defences. Trenches were opened against the Picurina, but the business of forming trenches in earth of the consistency of liquid mud may be imagined, as well as the difficulty of placing and working guns under such conditions. On March 25, however, fire was opened on the Picurina; then, impatient of the feebleness of his artillery, Wellington resolved to carry the fort with the bayonet.

At nine o'clock that night 500 men of the 3rd division in three tiny columns, led respectively by Shaw of the 74th, Powis of the 83rd, and Rudd of the 77th, leaped from the trenches and dashed at the great redoubt. One column was launched at the face of the work, the flank columns assailed its rear and sides. The distance was short, the troops quick, but



from Napier's "Peninsular War."

Walker & Boutall sc.

the moment the men showed clear of the trenches the Picurina opened its fire, and every gun from Badajos that commanded their line of approach added its thunder to the tumult. The palisades were reached; some were hewn down, but the weight of the fire forbade the stormers entering through the gaps. On the face of the work there was a ledge half-way up its front; the stormers reached this, pulled up their ladders, re-erected them on the ledge, and struggled up them to the top of the parapet. Here the French met them gallantly, and in the light of the incessantly darting musketry there could be seen from the trenches the dark figures contending fiercely on the parapet. Kempt, who was in charge of the attack, now sent his reserves forward at a run; they reached the broken palisades, and stormed in, and the Picurina was carried. The fight lasted an hour. It had two armies as spectators, and the British loss in killed and wounded amounted to 316 out of 500 combatants.

With the capture of the Picurina the English were able to establish their breaching batteries within 300 yards of the body of the place, and for twelve days there raged a desperate duel betwixt the trenches and Badajos, maintained with the fiercest energy and accompanied with great slaughter. By April 6 three breaches were established; one in the face of the Trinidad bastion, one on the flank of the bastion of Santa Maria, and a third breach betwixt these two.

Soult was advancing fast for the relief of the city, and Wellington resolved to attack.

It was Easter Sunday, April 6. At half-past seven the breaching guns were to cease their fire and the attacking columns to leap from the trench. Later, the time for the assault was changed to ten o'clock, but no corresponding change of order was given to the breaching batteries; an apparently trivial, but in reality very tragical blunder. The guns ceased their thunder at half-past seven. Then followed two hours and a half of quietness, during which Phillipon was able undisturbed to cover the front of the breach with harrows, crows'-feet, grenades, &c., and to stretch across the gap in the parapet that terrible *chevaux-de-frise* of glittering sword-blades against which the stormers were to press their desperate bodies in vain. Had the breach, or its crest, been swept by a tempest of grape till the moment the stormers were let loose, the lives of many hundreds of gallant men would have been saved. It is said, however, the batteries lacked ammunition for such a fire—so inadequate were Wellington's resources for the siege!

If we omit two attacks which were mere feints, five great assaults were to be delivered on Badajos. Picton, with the 3rd division, was to cross the Rivillas, and escalade the castle. Leith, with the 5th division, was to attack the bastion of San Vincente, a powerful work against which no breaching shot had yet been fired. The Light Division, under Barnard, was to

attack the smaller breach in Santa Maria; the 4th division, under Colville, was to storm the great breach in the Trinidad, and a detachment of the 4th division was to carry the breach in the curtain between Santa Maria and the Trinidad.

Of these five attacks, perhaps that on the third breach was the easiest; and it was never made! The party detailed for its assault was caught in the tumult of the fight at the great breach, and the next morning, while the other two breaches were strewn thick from foot to summit with the bodies of the slain, not one fallen body lay on the third breach! Of the other four attacks, those on the castle and on San Vincente succeeded where success seemed impossible, and this decided the fate of the city. It is the paradox of the siege that, having formed three practicable breaches, after twenty days' battering, the assault succeeded at not one of the three. The city was escaladed, and carried at two other points deemed too strong for attack by gunfire, and against which not a cannon-shot had been discharged! The smaller breach in the flank of Santa Maria was assailed only for a few minutes and by an isolated party. The storming columns got mixed together, and the three separate attacks were melted into one—a confused, furious, long-sustained assault on the great breach, that failed—or, rather, that failed until the French were shaken by knowing that the castle had been carried, and were taken in the rear by the victorious stormers of San Vincente.

The escalade of the castle seemed a task beyond the power of human valour to accomplish. The castle stood on a rock 100 feet high; the walls rose to a height ranging from 18 feet to 24 feet; the crest of the parapet was lined with loaded shells, huge stones, logs of wood, &c., ready to be flung down on the attacking party. The soldiers holding the crest had each six muskets lying loaded by his side, they were furnished with long poles shod with iron, with which to thrust down the ladders. A fringe of steel and the flashes of rolling musketry volleys threatened death to the daring stormers as they clambered up their shaking ladders.

The men of the 3rd division were standing silent in the trenches waiting for the signal, yet half-an-hour distant, when a lighted carcass flung from the castle revealed the long line of waiting soldiers. Picton was to lead, but had not yet come to the front. Kempt, his second, a fine soldier, instantly took forward the division. The Rivillas had to be traversed by a narrow bridge which the musketry of the castle smote as with a whip of flame. The men crossed in single file, were re-formed under fire, and led up the rocky slope to the foot of the castle walls. Here Kempt fell, and, as he was carried back, met Picton, black with anger and furious with haste, hurrying to the front. The whole assault of Badajos by this time was let loose. Leith Hay at the western extremity was flinging himself on San Vincente, the

men of the Light Division and of the 4th were racing forward to the two breaches. Badajos, from every bastion, and from the long curving crest of its walls, was pouring out its fire. Surtees, who watched the scene from the quarries, says the darting flames were so bright and incessant that he could plainly see the faces of the defenders, though nearly a mile off! Yet against a fire so dreadful the stormers raced forward with reckless daring.

The men of the 3rd meanwhile had placed their ladders against the lofty walls of the castle, and were crowding up them. The shouts, the crackle of musketry, the roar of the guns, the sound of the crashing ladders as they were broken by the huge stones flung on them, the ring of steel against steel as the men on the ladders which yet stood strove to force their way on to the parapet, made the wildest tumult. Pakenham, Wellington's brother-in-law, who afterwards died in front of New Orleans, was one who reached the crest, only to be thrust down it with a bayonet stab. But the advantage was with the defenders, and for a moment the men of the 3rd drew back, broken but furious. "If we cannot win the castle," Picton cried wrathfully to his soldiers, "let us die upon the walls!" The men were reformed, and two officers, Colonel Ridge and an ensign named Cauch, seized a ladder and ran forward with it to a new spot, where the wall was slightly lower. Another ladder was brought to the same spot, the

men streamed furiously up, and the castle was won; but Ridge, with many another gallant soldier, died on the ramparts.

One of the first to mount was Lieutenant Macpherson of the 45th. On reaching the top of the ladder he found it still below the crest. According to his own story he "shouted directions to those below, and, pushing the head of the ladder from the wall, the men below, seizing its lowest rung, lifted him bodily to the summit." Here a French soldier deliberately put his musket against his body and fired. The ball struck a metal button on his coat and glanced off, but not without driving two fractured ribs in upon his lungs. Pakenham, who was next below him, tried to clamber past his wounded friend, but in vain; and at that moment the ladder broke. Macpherson lay long insensible at the foot of the wall, but recovered consciousness, clambered into the castle, and had the satisfaction of pulling down and capturing the French flag that flew above it.

Picton found that the gates which led from the castle into the town were walled up, and the slaughter amongst his own men had been so dreadful that for the moment he was content with holding the castle he had won, instead of breaking through to take the other breaches in flank.

Leith Hay, in his turn, had succeeded at San Vincente, and this, too, where success seemed impossible. The ditch was 6 feet deep, the scarp

30 feet high, the glacis mined, the parapet fringed with veterans. The Portuguese battalions, appalled by the fire poured upon them, flung down their ladders and fled. But the British caught up the ladders, broke through the palisade, leaped into the ditch—only to find the ladders too short! A mine was sprung under their feet, they were pelted with musketry from above, their ladders broken with huge stones. Yet the stubborn British persevered. At one spot the bastion was lower, and the ladders were replaced here. One soldier was thrust by his comrades up and over the crest, others followed, and the bastion was won.

The five assaults of that night were alike in heroism, but the tragedy of the struggle reached its climax at the great breach, or rather at the two breaches. The storming parties of the two columns raced side by side to the ditch, bags of hay were thrown into it to lessen its depth, ladders placed down the counterscarp, and in a moment the ditch was crowded with gallant soldiers. At that instant a mine beneath it was exploded: it became a sort of crater of flame in which perished, almost at a breath, hundreds of brave men. The red flame lit up for a moment the whole face of Badajos, with its crowded parapets and madly-working guns. The men of the Light Division, coming on at a run, reached the edge of the smoking ditch just after the explosion, and stood for an instant amazed at the

sight. "Then," says Napier, "with a shout that matched even the sound of the explosion, they leaped into it, and crowded up the breach." The 4th division came running up with equal fury to attack the middle breach, but the ditch was deep with water, and the first eager files that sprang into it were trodden down by their comrades, and "about a hundred of the Fusiliers, the men of Albuera," perished there. It illustrates the confusion of a night attack that the stormers of the Light Division were on the point of firing into an unseen body coming up on their flank, which proved to be the stormers of the 4th division, coming up at a run to join them.

In front of the Trinidad bastion itself the ditch was very wide, its centre occupied by a high unfinished ravelin. The men eagerly climbed up this, believing it to be the foot of the breach. They found instead there gaped before them, wide and black and deep, yet another ditch. They must leap into its dark and muddy depths and clamber up its farther side before reaching the real foot of the breach. That unhappy ravelin undoubtedly broke the rush of the stormers. The men gathered on its summit and began to fire back at the parapets. The Light Division, too, in the darkness and tumult, had mistaken its path. Its men crowded to the ravelin by the side of their comrades of the 4th division, and, in the noise and madness of the scene, it was impossible to withdraw the men

of the Light Division and lead them to their assigned point of attack.

The leaders of the attacking columns, leaping from the crowded ravelin into the farther ditch, led the right way up the breach; but it was impossible to re-form the columns, and set them in ordered and disciplined movement up its rough slope; and only by the momentum of a column in regular formation could the obstructions that barred the breach be swept aside. Here was the great *chevaux-de-frise*, set with sharpened sword-blades. Behind it was a triple rank of infantry firing swiftly. Loaded shells were rolled down amongst the English, guns from either flank smote them incessantly with grape. "Never," says Jones, in his history of the siege—"never since the discovery of gunpowder were men more seriously exposed to its action than those assembled in the ditch to assault the breaches. Many thousand shells and hand-grenades, numerous bags filled with powder, every kind of burning composition and destructive missile had been prepared, and placed behind the parapets of the whole front. These, under an incessant roll of musketry, were hurled into the ditch, without intermission, for upwards of two hours, giving its whole surface an appearance of vomiting fire, and producing occasional flashes of light more vivid than the day, followed by momentary utter darkness."

In that wild scene disciplined order had perished.

The impulse of attack had to be supplied by the daring of individual leadership, and this did not fail. Every other moment an officer would spring forward with a shout, and climb the breach; a swarm of gallant men would follow. They swept up the slope like leaves driven by a whirlwind; they seemed to shrivel in the incessantly-darting flames that streamed from the crest, they were driven back again like leaves caught in an eddy of the winds. Again and again, a score of times over, that human wave flung its spray upon the stony slope of the breach; and each time the wave sank back again; but the charging parties seldom numbered more than fifty at a time. For two hours that scene raged. The British, unable to advance and scorning to retreat, at last stood on the slope and crest of the ravelin or in the ditch below, leaning on their muskets and looking in sullen fury at the breach, while the French, shooting swiftly from the ramparts, asked tauntingly "why they did not come into Badajos." An officer who stood amongst the sullen groups in the ditch says, "I had seen severe fighting often, but nothing like this. We stood passively to be slaughtered."

Shaw Kennedy fixes on one British sergeant named Nicholas as the hero of the wild fight on the breach. "Nicholas," says Kennedy, "seemed determined to tear the sword-blades of the *chevaux-de-frise* from their fastenings, in which attempt he