

was brought before him. At three he dined, was on horseback again at five, till evening closed, and was then employed in business till ten, when he retired to rest. Mortifying as it was, having in himself glorious anticipations of what he could effect with adequate means, at the same time to feel himself crippled for want of them, no embarrassments ever had the effect of perplexing his judgement, or leading him to despond; but making his preparations with long forethought, he waited the opportunity for attempting whatever his means allowed him to undertake.

The force with which he intended to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo consisted of 17,000 British, and 14,000 Portugueze, . . so inferior to what Marmont might bring into the field against him, that every thing depended upon secrecy in his plans, and celerity in their execution. That he would undertake the siege was what every officer who reasoned, or talked about the ensuing campaign, could not but conclude; but when it was his intention was not communicated even to those persons in whom he placed most confidence, and of whom he entertained the* highest opinion. The works of Almeida which Brennier had demolished, when with so much credit to himself he abandoned the place, were restored; British and Portugueze troops in equal numbers

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*Lord Wel-
lington pre-
pares for
the siege of
Ciudad
Rodrigo.*

* One of those friends obtained leave to go to England at the beginning of the winter. Upon rejoining the army after the capture of the place, he expressed his sorrow to Lord Wellington that his request should have been granted at a time when an enterprise of such importance was contemplated. Lord Wellington replied to this effect: "Perhaps, . . you did me better service by your absence, than you could have rendered had you been on the spot. Have you never said that your presence was required at home for your own family affairs, and that it was your intention to ask leave as soon as the campaign was over and nothing more was to be done? And do you suppose that Marmont had not heard this, and known of your departure?"

CHAP. being employed upon them, and receiving working money, and
XL. such of them as were bricklayers or stonemasons, and acted as
1811. artificers, double pay. This, which the French might consider
a defensive measure, was for the purpose of providing a safe
depôt for the battering train. That train was conveyed up the
Douro forty miles, farther than the boats of the country had
navigated the river before, our engineers having removed the im-
pediments which rendered it innavigable. There had been such
difficulty in obtaining means of transport, that for this reason
alone, Lord Wellington had been obliged to undertake feeding
all the Portugueze troops that were incorporated in the British
divisions. The system of the Portugueze commissariat was to
embargo carts and cattle for this service, . . . a grievous evil to the
owners, who knew that they were likely never to be paid, and that
their beasts would probably be worked to death; unless, therefore,
they were closely watched, they, as might be expected, deserted,
and left the supplies to take their chance. Nor, when British
faith was pledged for payment of the commissariat accounts,
was there any perceptible amendment, so long as the means of
transport were to be supplied by the local authorities: these
authorities showed little alacrity in executing the orders of go-
vernment, and the people as little in obeying their requisitions:
for the magistrates being delivered from immediate danger had
relapsed into that apathy which had long pervaded every de-
partment of the body politic. There were 20,000 carts in
Alentejo, and yet, when Lord Wellington was on that frontier,
it was with difficulty that 600 could be procured for the service
of the army. The institutions of the country were excellent;
but government could not enforce the laws, and the magistrates
would not: the British were the only persons who observed
them, and by that observance, subjected themselves to serious
inconvenience; they depended upon the civil magistrate, who

neglected his duty, and they were then left to shift for themselves. To prevent this evil, a waggon train was now attached to the British commissariat, and upwards of 600 carts, each capable of carrying eight hundred weight, and upon a better construction than the primitive carts of the country, were built at Lisbon, Porto, and Almeida. To this latter place the battering train was conveyed towards the close of November; and when relying upon Lord Wellington's comparative weakness, and the improbability of his attempting any serious operation at that season, Marmont had detached Montbrun to the eastern coast, and Dorsenne had ordered two other divisions to Asturias and the Montaña; the allied troops began to make fascines and gabions at their respective head quarters, on the 27th of December; and the 6th of January was fixed for the investment of Ciudad Rodrigo.

The time of year, and the exhausted state of the country, contributed to deceive the French: they did not suppose that Lord Wellington would, in the depth of winter, undertake an operation of such importance, nor that his army could long endure the privations to which they must be exposed. Every thing which could serve for the support of man or beast had been consumed for miles and miles around; and on that part of the frontier there was little grain at any time, the tract for corn commencing at Salamanca and its neighbourhood, where the enemy were cantoned. The allied troops were four days together without bread; and the officers purchased it at the rate of three shillings the quartern loaf, and at one time five. The horses, though hardy as if they had never stood in a stable, and rough as if never groom had laid his hand upon their coats, began to fail; all the straw having been consumed, they had nothing to subsist on except coarse long grass pulled up from under the trees, and so thoroughly sun-dried that little nourishment was left in it.

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 1812. Because of this scarcity, the three brigades of cavalry took the outpost duty in rotation, .. and the regiments lost about fifty horses each by starvation.

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A heavy rain fell on the first night of the new year ; and the weather continued so inclement till the fifth, that the investment was necessarily deferred till two days later than the time originally fixed. General Mackinnon's brigade marching from Aldea da Ponte to Robledo, six and twenty miles through a continued oak forest, had in many places to make their way knee deep in snow ; between 300 and 400 men were left on the road, of whom some died on the march, several afterwards of fatigue. There was no camp-equipage with the army, nor cover near the town : the troops were therefore cantoned in the nearest villages, and it was regulated, that the light, first, and third divisions, should alternately take the duties of the siege, each remaining four and twenty hours on the ground.

Ciudad Rodrigo.

Ciudad Rodrigo stands in the middle of a plain some sixteen miles in circumference, surrounded by hills, which rise gradually, ridge behind ridge above each other on every side, far as the eye can reach. From those heights, at a distance of ten or twelve miles, the movement of the British army might be perceived ; but the enemy seem at this time to have exercised no vigilance, and voluntary information was never given them by the Spaniards. The city is on a rising ground, on the right bank of the Agueda, which in that part of its course forms many little islets. The citadel standing on a high mount has been likened, for its situation, to Windsor Castle. The works were old, and in many respects faulty ; and the suburbs, which are about three hundred yards from the town on the west, had no other defence, at the time of the former siege, than a bad earthen intrenchment hastily thrown up ; but the French had made strong posts of three convents, one in the centre of the suburbs,

and one on either flank ; and they had converted another convent just beyond the glacis on the north-west angle of the place into an infantry post. Being thus supported, the works of the suburbs, bad as they were, were thought fully capable of resisting a *coup de main*. The ground is every where flat and rocky except on the north, where there are two pieces of rising ground, one at the distance of six hundred yards from the works, being about thirteen feet higher than the ramparts, the other at less than a third of that distance, nearly on a level with them : the soil here is very stony, and in the winter season water rises at the depth of half a foot below the surface. The enemy had provided against an attack on this side, by erecting a redoubt upon the higher ground, which was supported by two guns, and a howitzer in battery on the fortified convent of S. Francisco at four hundred yards distance : and a large proportion of the artillery of the place was in battery to fire upon the approach from the hill.

On this side, however, it was deemed advisable to make the attack, because of the difficulty of cutting trenches in a rocky soil, and the fear of delay in winning the suburbs, . . the garrison being sure of relief if they could gain even but a little time. On this side too it was known, by Massena's attack, that the walls might be breached at a distance from the glacis ; whereas, on the east and south it was doubtful, because of a fall in the ground, whether this could be done without erecting batteries on the glacis : but here a small ravine at the foot of the glacis and its consequent steepness, would conceal the workmen during their operations for blowing in the counterscarp, a circumstance which had great weight in forming the plan of an attack, where not a single officer had ever seen such an operation performed.

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Colonel
Jones's
Journal of
the siege,
p. 82-3.

Colonel
Jones's
Journals,
84.

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*January.**A redoubt
carried.*

Time was of such importance, and such preparations had been made before the army moved from its quarters, that ground was broken on the very night of the investment. At nine that night, a detachment under Lieutenant Colbourne of the 52d attacked the redoubt on the upper *teson* or hill. Lieutenant Thomson (of the Royal engineers) preceded the detachment with a party of men carrying ladders, fascines, axes, &c.: he found the palisades to be within three feet of the counterscarp, and nearly of the same height: fascines were immediately laid from the one to the other, by which, as by a bridge, part of the storming party walked over. When they came to the escarpe, which was not revêted, the men scrambled up, some of them sticking their bayonets into the sods, and so entered the work; while another party went round to the gorge, where there was no ditch, and forced the gate. Only four of the garrison escaped into the town, and only three were killed; two officers and forty-three men were made prisoners; the loss of the assailants was six men killed, three officers and sixteen men wounded. A lodgement was then made on the hill near the redoubt, and with little loss, because the enemy directed their fire chiefly into the work; and a communication was opened to it.

The siege was carried on with extraordinary vigour; and Lord Wellington calculating upon intelligence which he received, that Marmont would advance to relieve the place even before the rapid plan of operations on which he had determined could be carried through, resolved to form a breach, if possible, from the first batteries, and storm the place with the counterscarp entire, if he could not wait until it should be blown up. The weather increased the difficulties of the undertaking: while the frost continued, men could not work through the

night; and when it broke, they who were employed in the sap worked day and night up to their knees in water, under the declivity of a hill down which the rain had poured. Of 250 mules attached to the light division, fifty died in conveying ammunition to the breaches, . . . destroyed by being overworked, and by want of needful rest and sufficient food. The garrison were encouraged, not only by the confident expectation of relief, (for they knew Marmont was strong enough to effect it, and could not suppose that, for want of foresight, he had disabled himself for attempting it in time,) but also by the failure of the allies at Badajoz, and the inferiority of our engineering department. They omitted no means of defence, and neglected no opportunity which presented itself. On the night, between the 13th and 14th, the convent of Santa Cruz, in which they kept a strong guard, was attacked and taken. From the steeple of the cathedral which commanded the plain, and where there was always an officer on the look out, they noticed a careless custom, that when the division to be relieved saw the relieving division advancing, the guards and workmen were withdrawn from the trenches to meet it; sore weariness and pinching cold were present and pressing evils, which made them overlook the danger of leaving the works unguarded at such intervals. Profiting by this, some 500 men made a sortie at the right point of time, upset most of the gabions which during the preceding night had been placed in advance of the first parallel, penetrated some of them into the right of that parallel, and would have pushed into the batteries and spiked the guns, had it not been for the steady conduct of a few workmen, whom an officer of engineers collected into a body: on the approach of part of the first division, they retired into the town.

Captain Ross of the engineers, one of the directors, was killed by a chain shot from St. Francisco's: he was brother to

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*January.**Convent of
Santa Cruz
taken.**Jan. 14.**Captain
Ross killed.*

CHAP. that excellent officer who afterward fell at Baltimore, and was
 XL. himself a man of great professional promise, uniting with mili-
 1812. tary talents, a suavity of manners, and a gentleness of disposi-
 January. tion, especially to be prized in a profession where humanity is
 so greatly needed. His friend and comrade, Lieutenant Skel-
 ton, was killed at the same time, and buried with him, in the
 same grave, in a little retired valley, not far from the spot where
 they fell. Colonel (then Captain Jones, to whose history of the
 war, and more especially, to whose Journals of the Sieges this
 work is greatly indebted), placed a small pedestal with an in-
 scription to mark the grave, and with prudent as well as christi-
 an feeling, surmounted it with a cross. That humble monu-
 ment has, because of its christian symbol, been respected; . . Spaniards
 have been seen kneeling there, and none pass it without
 uncovering their heads.

A howitzer placed in the garden of St. Francisco's convent
 so as to enfilade one of the batteries, had caused many casual-
 ties and impeded the progress of the work. The convent also
 looked into the rear of the second parallel. Two guns which
 were opened upon this edifice on the 14th, at the same time that
 twenty-five were opened against the walls of the place, did not
 drive the enemy from their advantageous post; a party, there-
 fore, of the 40th regiment was ordered to force into it at dusk,
 and as soon as they had escalated the outer wall, the French,
 leaving their artillery, retired into the town, not from the con-
 vent only, but from the suburbs, which were immediately occu-
 pied by the 40th.

*St. Fran-
 cisco's taken
 and the
 suburbs.*

The batteries had injured the wall so much on the second day,
 as to give hopes of speedily bringing it down. A fog compelled
 them to cease firing on the 16th; the engineers took advantage
 of the cover which the fog afforded them, and placed fifty
 gabions in prolongation of the second parallel. That parallel

was pushed to its proper extent on the left in the course of the night, and the lower *teson* crowned by it. The sappers also broke out the head of the sap: but they could do nothing on the hill, and but little in the sap, because of their inexperience, and because the enemy's artillery knocked over their gabions, nearly as fast as they could be replaced. Yet, the assistance which the engineers derived from the men of the third division, who had been instructed in sapping during the summer, was invaluable, and enabled them to push the approaches three hundred yards nearer than at the attack of Badajoz, under a much heavier fire. An unusual length of time was nevertheless required for throwing up the batteries, owing to the small front of the work, against which the enemy directed an incessant fire of shell; they fired during the siege 11,000 shells and nearly 10,000 shot upon the approaches: their practice was remarkably accurate, and not one shot was fired at them in return. "It was not unfrequent to have three or four large shells in the course of an hour explode in the middle of the parapet of a battery, each having the effect of a small mine, and scattering the earth in every direction. In consequence of this dire destruction, the parapets were of necessity made of a great thickness." But on the other hand, a confidence was felt both by the officers and men, which they had not partaken at either of the former sieges; the officers had sufficient means at their disposal, and the men seemed to perceive that the operations were differently conducted. The artillery was excellent, as well as ample in quantity, and its effect was materially improved by a circumstance in which accident corrected an actual defect of science. There happened to be a considerable quantity of shot in the fortress at Almeida, and of all calibres; when there was such want of transport for bringing shot from the rear, it became of great importance to take as many of these as could

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Col. Jones's
Journal of
Sieges, 102.

Ib. 103.