

making; and the troops were then put in motion, glad to remove from an exhausted country, where the labour of procuring forage amounted to constant occupation for the cavalry, none being to be found except the straw which the peasants had reserved and endeavoured to conceal, as the only subsistence left for their remaining cattle. Corn was so scarce that the very few officers who could afford such an expenditure paid the enormous price of fourteen dollars the *fanega* for it, in prudence, as well as in mercy to their beasts; and the owner, loading his horse with his own precious provender, performed the march himself on foot. One division of infantry remained on the Agueda, covered by a few cavalry posts. The main body proceeding by rapid marches to the Tagus crossed it, some at Abrantes, some at Villa Velha. Lord Wellington having completed his arrangements at Ciudad Rodrigo, and given it finally over to the Spaniards, set out for Alemtejo on the 5th of March, and on the 11th his head-quarters were fixed at Elvas. On the 16th, the preparations being completed, a pontoon bridge was thrown across the Guadiana about a league below Badajoz; and the light, 3rd, and 4th divisions under Lieutenant-Colonel Barnard, Generals Picton and Colville, crossed and invested the place without opposition. General Graham, with the 1st, 6th, and 7th divisions of infantry, and Generals Slade and Le Marchant's brigades of cavalry, advanced to Los Santos, Zafra, and Llerena, to oppose any movements on the part of Marshal Soult; while Sir Rowland Hill with the 2nd division, General Hamilton's Portuguese division, and a brigade of cavalry moved from their cantonments near Albuquerque to Merida and Almendralejo, thus interposing between Soult and Marmont if the latter should march from Salamanca with the intention of forming a junction as in the preceding year.

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*Preparations for its defence.*

The governor, G. Baron Philippon, had obtained intelligence from his spies of the preparations which were making at Elvas, and had apprised Soult accordingly that there was probably an intention of again besieging Badajoz; but it was not till the day before Lord Wellington arrived at Elvas that he knew a battering-train had been collected there, and that the allies were concentrating their forces near the Alemtejo frontier. He had before this applied for a supply of powder and shells, a convoy of which was twice sent from Seville, and twice by Sir Rowland Hill's movements forced to put back, though the Comte d'Erlon, General Drouet, had been charged to protect it. The place had been greatly strengthened since the last unsuccessful siege, especially on the side which had then been attacked. Upon the spot where the allies had planted their breaching-battery against Fort St. Christoval, a lunette had been constructed by Marshal Soult's orders: its ditches were cut in the rock to the depth of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  feet below the *Verme*: a powder-magazine and a bomb-proof for fifty men had been constructed there, and every means taken for securing it against a *coup-de-main*. The Tête-de-Pont also had been strengthened, and its communication with Fort St. Christoval repaired, so that on that side the place presented a most formidable appearance. The Pardaleras too had been repaired and strengthened, and magazines established in the castle into which, and into the citadel, it was the governor's intention to retire if the place should be rendered no longer tenable. The enemy had also formed galleries and trenches at each salient of the counterscarp in front of what they supposed would be the point of attack, that they might form mines under the breaching-batteries, and afterwards sink shafts for other mines, whereby to destroy the works in proportion as the assailants should gain them, and thus leave only a heap of ruins

if the place should be taken. No foresight indeed had been wanting on the governor's part. The peasantry having taken flight at the first siege and left their lands uncultivated, he had given directions for ploughing them with the oxen which were intended for slaughter, and they were sown by the soldiers within a circle of 3,000 yards: the kitchen gardens had also been distributed among the different corps and the officers of the staff, and in these they had a valuable resource. Wood was wanting for blinds and for palisades, for these had been almost wholly destroyed during the former siege: they had no means of transport for it, and it could only have been procured from a dangerous distance: to make charcoal, they were fain to dig up the roots of olive-trees which had been burnt. A convoy of some threescore mules laden with flour arrived a few days before the investment, when the garrison had about five weeks' provisions in store. The miserable townspeople were worse provided: most of those who could remove without exposing themselves to extreme distress had left the city before it was first attacked; others forsook it now, who had experienced the horrors of two former sieges, . . . old men, women, and children, carrying what little had been left them, were on the road in every direction, flying from a renewal of these horrors. The population was reduced from 16,000 to little more than a fourth of that number, who thought better to abide the worst where they had a place wherein to lay their heads, than to perish as wanderers.

Though the allied army had now no want of means as in the former siege, they had no miners, nor was there any person there who had ever seen such duty performed; the sappers too had had very little experience. The only course which could be pursued was to batter from a distance the Trinidad bastion where the counter-guard in its front had not been finished: this could be done

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CHAP. from the hill on which the Picurina redoubt stands ; and that  
 XL. redoubt must be carried and connected with the first parallel.

1812. The plan was so hazardous, and so little according to rule, that  
 “ it never was for a moment approved by any one employed in  
 drawing it up, or in the execution of it.” No one doubted its  
 success more than Lord Wellington himself ; but it was deemed  
 necessary to reduce Badajoz, and there was no chance of re-  
 ducing it by any other course.

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*Colonel*  
*Jones's*  
*Journals,*  
 298.

*Siege of*  
*Badajoz.*

On the night of the 16th the besiegers broke ground during a storm of wind, with heavy and uninterrupted rain. It was so dark that nothing could be seen by the enemy, and the tempest prevented them from hearing the working parties, who under these favourable circumstances were not discovered till daylight, although only 160 yards from the covered way of the fort. The ensuing night also was well employed. The weather continued so rainy that the trenches were knee-deep in mud and water. Had the soil been heavier, it would not have been possible to bring up the heavy artillery ; manual assistance, as well as sixteen bullocks, being required to draw along each piece. It was a severe service for the three divisions, who had to go through more than double the work which had occupied four at Ciudad Rodrigo ; and their tents were far from being proof against such rain. On the 18th the garrison made a sally with 1,500 infantry and forty horse : they formed unobserved in the communication from the lunette St. Roque to the Picurina, then pushed forward, and were in the parallel before the workmen could stand to their arms ; at the same moment the cavalry came round the right flank of the parallel at a hand gallop, and were presently in the depots, a thousand yards in rear of the trenches. There they made great confusion among the unarmed men, but retired on the appearance of troops before they could destroy any thing. They took two or three officers prisoners, tied them to their

saddles, and cantered off with them some hundred yards, but on their falling from fatigue let them go. The infantry meantime filled in a small part of the parallel before the coverers came to the relief of the working parties : they were then driven back in great confusion, carrying off about 200 intrenching tools. But this sortie cost the allies about 150 men in killed and wounded ; the commanding engineer, Lieutenant-Colonel Fletcher, being among the latter.

The weather, which had at first covered the operations of the allies, continued now so rainy as to impede them : the trenches were filled with water, and there was no possibility of draining them, the ground being a dead level ; it was necessary to empty them and make an artificial bottom of fascines. On the 21st the enemy advanced two field-pieces on the right of the Guadiana to enfilade the parallel : such an intention having been apprehended on the preceding day, the parallel had been thrown back during the night ; these guns, therefore, did little mischief, and they were compelled to withdraw them by a few riflemen posted on the banks of the river. But on the following night they threw up cover for three field-pieces there, brought them out soon after daybreak, and kept up a very destructive fire throughout the day, their shot pitching into the parallel at a range of 1,400 yards. The inconvenience of having left the place open on that side was then felt, and the 5th division was ordered from Campo-mayor to invest it. That evening the trenches were again filled by one of those showers in which the rain seems rather to pour down in streams than to fall in drops : the pontoon bridge was carried away by the rise of the Guadiana, and the current of that river became so rapid that the flying bridges could with difficulty work : it became doubtful, therefore, whether the army could be supplied with provisions, and whether guns and ammunition could be brought over for the

CHAP. attack; and it began to be seriously apprehended, that if the weather  
 XL. continued thus to favour the enemy the siege must be raised.

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An immediate improvement relieved that apprehension: the trenches were rendered passable during the night; the morning was fine: it was apparent that the enemy had mistaken the intended point of attack, for they had large parties employed in strengthening places against which nothing was designed: the batteries were so advanced that there seemed no doubt of their opening on the morrow, when at three in the afternoon the skies again began to pour down; every part of the trenches was again filled with rain: no advance could be made next day, the ground being so completely saturated that the water stood every where in pools, . . . the earth was too wet to retain any form, the revetements of the batteries fell, no solid foundation upon which to lay the platforms could be obtained, and the guns could not be brought across the fields. But on the following afternoon the weather became fine; the batteries were completed in the course of the night; they opened on the forenoon of the 25th; and being now secured by a good parallel, and the batteries enfilading all the faces and flanks of the place which bore on Fort Picurina, it was determined to assault that fort that night.

The enemy, as soon as they perceived what point was immediately threatened, took every means for strengthening it, and abandoning their works on the right bank deepened the ditch of the Picurina, and strengthened the gorge with a second row of palisades: they also formed galleries communicating with each other, and brought a reverse fire to flank the ditches. Under the three angles of the glacis they placed fougasses, and arranged upon the parapets loaded shells and barrels of combustibles, which were to be rolled among the assailants at the moment of assault; and that each man might have several pieces to discharge, 200 loaded muskets were ranged along the interior

crest of the parapet. With these preparations the governor calculated upon a good defence. Six batteries played upon the fort and the town, and were answered from a greater number of guns: the Portugueze gunners stood to their cannon with as much coolness, and directed them with as much precision, as the British: it was impossible to say whether the guns of the besiegers or of the besieged were best served, and this uninterrupted roar of artillery was continued till sunset with great destruction on both sides. Captain Mulcaster of the engineers, an officer of great ability, was killed in the parallel by a cannon-shot.

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Major-General Kempt, who commanded in the trenches, directed the assault of the fort. Two detachments of 200 men each were formed in the parallel: both were to quit it at the same time by signal; the one under Lieutenant Stanway, on the extreme left, to move round the right flank of the work and endeavour to force the gorge; the other under Lieutenant Gipps, from an opening about the middle of the parallel, to move direct upon the communication from the town to the fort, leave 100 men there to prevent succour from being sent, and with the other hundred to march upon the work with the two-fold purpose, of aiding the left detachment in forcing the gorge, and of preventing the garrison from escaping. Another 100 men under Captain Holloway, R. E., were formed in one of the batteries to assist the others by a front attack, if they should find much difficulty in forcing in at the gorge. About ten o'clock the signal was made: the left party reached the gorge undiscovered; but when they attempted to cut down and force over the palisades, so heavy a fire of musketry was opened upon them that none could effect it. That half of the right detachment which proceeded to the gorge was received also with such a fire, that their attempts to get over the palisade were fruit-

CHAP. less : instead of persevering in the desperate endeavour, they  
XL. drew round to the left flank of the work where the ditch was  
1812. not flanked, fixed their ladders against the escarpe, and were  
*March.* presently on the top of the parapet overlooking the enemy, who  
defended the rear : at the same moment Captain Holloway's  
party from the battery forced in at the salient angle, ..but  
both that officer and Lieutenant Gipps were wounded. The  
garrison seeing the assailants within the works ran into a guard-  
house, and there barricadoed themselves : the troops were not  
prepared to dislodge them ; they had lost their leaders ; and  
while they were uncertain how to proceed, a report arose that  
a large detachment was coming from the town to relieve the  
fort. It seemed in their confusion as if they were on the point  
of abandoning the place ; and the garrison supposing this to be  
the case, came out of the guard-house. But at that critical  
moment General Kempt by great exertions restored their con-  
fidence : they turned upon the enemy, and of the 300 who com-  
posed the garrison scarcely any escaped. They fought reso-  
lutely to the very last, their officer setting them a brave ex-  
ample : several threw themselves into the water and were  
drowned, about 70 only were made prisoners. The loss of the  
assailants was greater : four officers and 50 men were killed,  
15 officers and 250 men wounded. It was found, upon  
inspecting the fort, that the batteries had done very little to  
facilitate its capture ; and the engineers said, that had they been  
aware how little it was injured, they would not have recom-  
mended the escalade so soon. The advantage which had been  
gained was of great importance ; but those successes are dan-  
gerous in their consequences, as well as dearly bought at the  
time, in which courage performs what ought to be the effect of  
skill.

The enemy, who undervalued the skill of our engineers, and



had such an opinion of British valour that they thought nothing too rash or too desperate for it to undertake, supposed that a general assault was intended. And about the time when the Picurina had been carried, the alarm-bell rang in the town, rockets were thrown up, and a random fire of musketry and cannon was opened from every part of the works. Presently, the alarm of a sortie was given by a drum beating in the lunette of S. Roque; the guard of the trenches commenced a heavy fire, this occasioned a heavier firing from the town, which again increased that from the trenches, and it was not till long after midnight that the vain alarm on both sides subsided. It had not been without some cause; a battalion had been ordered out to succour the fort, but so late as to sustain a heavy fire from it, which compelled them to retire with the loss of twenty men. A lodgement was then formed on the *terre-plein* of the fort, which lodgement was knocked to pieces in the course of the following day, by a constant and very heavy fire from the town; but before night the sappers completed a fresh one. Other batteries were now constructed, and the enemy then perceiving that the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions were the objects of attack, used all possible means for strengthening them.

The enemy imputed the loss of the Picurina to the misconduct of its garrison; the captain of artillery had been wounded in the course of the day, and relieved by one who was thought not to have shown equal courage: no use had been made of the loaded shells and combustibles; but if the fort had been well defended, the governor thought the allies would have failed, as they did in their assault during the former siege. A singular stratagem was now practised by the commanding officer of the engineers, Colonel Lamarre, which, if accident had not frustrated it, would have cost the allies dear. Captain Ellicombe, going at dusk to adjust the lines of direction of the sap

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CHAP. for the night, found those returns which were already begun, in  
 XL. a good line, clear of enfilade, but that which was marked by the  
 1812. white line and not yet commenced, fell in the direct enfilade of  
 three guns : this he mentioned as a lucky discovery, and it was  
 supposed to have been the effect of accident, the line it was  
 thought having, at the time of laying it down, caught unobserved  
 in the dark against some stone or bush. But it was afterwards  
 ascertained that a soldier had been sent out from the place  
 just as evening closed, to remove it, and bring it directly under  
 fire.

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April 4.

It was against the lunette of S. Roque that these works were intended ; could the enemy be driven thence, a dam which retained the waters of an inundation might be broken down, and the works might then be pushed much nearer to the place. More skill and more courage could not have been displayed than were manifested by the garrison, animated as they were by former success, and by the expectation of being speedily relieved. On the other hand, Lord Wellington was not without cause to apprehend that a second battle of Albuhera might be to be fought. On the 30th of March it was understood that Soult was advancing, and the fifth division was therefore withdrawn from before St. Christoval and marched to the front, some Portugueze cavalry being stationed to watch the town on that side. Two breaching batteries opened next day on the Trinidad bastion, but these produced no considerable effect, and the sappers had made little progress against S. Roque's, when Marshal Soult advanced to Llerena. It was then intended to leave ten thousand men for guarding the trenches, and to give him battle with the remainder of the army : the covering army was about to fall back on Talaveruela. But at noon on the 5th, Lord Wellington reconnoitred the trenches and thought they might immediately be assaulted ; in the afternoon he determined to