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*October.*

attempt would have been far more hazardous ; but it is said to have been prevented by an intimation from Don Carlos, that if the place were thus injured, he would put the governor and all the officers to death, and decimate the men. Towards the end of October, they proposed to surrender, on condition of being allowed to march into France with six pieces of cannon ; their second proposal was, that they should march thither under an engagement of not serving against the allies for a year and a day. Don Carlos replied, that he had orders not to grant them a capitulation on any terms excepting that they should be prisoners of war ; and to this they declared they would never submit. Upon these terms, nevertheless, on the last day of October, they surrendered, being 4000 in number ; and the Spanish general, setting an example of proper determination on such an occasion, refused to grant these, till he had ascertained that none of the inhabitants had perished during the blockade either through ill-treatment or for want.

*Marshal  
Soul's po-  
sition on the  
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Marshal Soult, meantime, was receiving a considerable reinforcement of conscripts. Papers in all the languages of the allies were thrown into the outposts, and distributed wherever it was likely they might be found, inviting deserters, and denouncing vengeance if France should be invaded : the whole French nation, it was said, was in arms, and if the English and Spanish and Portugueze should set foot upon their territory, they should meet with nothing but death and destruction. Some expectation the French commander placed upon the hardships to which the troops must be exposed, at that season, in the Pyrenees, upon the weather, and in consequence the increased difficulty of supplying the allied armies. Forage, indeed, had become so scarce, that some of the cavalry were reduced to graze their horses, which of course could not long have been kept in condition without better food. The cattle brought for the

consumption of the troops through a great part of Spain arrived in a jaded and lean condition, . . . those which lived to reach the place of slaughter, . . . for the roads along which they had been driven might easily be traced by their numerous carcasses, lying half-buried or unburied by the way-side, . . . sad proofs of the wasteful inhumanity of war! The weather had been more stormy than was usual even on that coast and at that season. The transports at Passages were moored stem and stern in rows, and strongly confined by their moorings; yet they were considered in danger even in that land-locked harbour: some were driven forward by the rising of the swell, while others, close alongside, were forced backward by its fall, so that the bowsprits of some were entangled in the mizen-chains of others. The cold on the mountains was so intense, that several men perished. A piquet in the neighbourhood of Roncesvalles was snowed up: the parties who were sent to rescue it drove bullocks before them as some precaution against the danger of falling into chasms, and the men were brought off; but the guns could not be removed, and were buried under the snow in the ditch of the redoubt. Soult, since his failure in the Pyrenees three months before, had been fortifying a formidable line of works in them. The right rested upon the sea in front of S. Jean de Luz, and on the left of the Nivelle; the centre on La Petite Rhune, and the heights behind the village of Sarré; the left, consisting of two divisions of infantry, under General Drouet, was on the right of the river, on a strong height behind the village of Ainhoue, and on the mountain of Mondarin, which protected the approach to that village. Two divisions, under Generals Foy and Paris, were at S. Jean de Pied-de-Port. This position described a half circle through Irogne, Ascain, Sarré, Ainhoue, Espelette, and Cambo, the centre projecting very much at Sarré. La Petite Rhune, though overtopped by the greater hill of

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 1813. *November.* the same name, from which it is separated by a narrow valley, is a very high ridge: from the sea to its foot the enemy's front was covered by a range of works; the ridge itself was strongly fortified; and a range of high steep hills, extending from thence to Ainhoë, was defended by a chain of redoubts near enough to protect each other. The enemy's centre was in great force upon this range; and there was a strong corps in the village of Sarré, which was protected by a regular closed work with ditch and palisades. Their left was thrown back, at nearly an acute angle, upon Espelette.

*Passage of  
 the Nivelle.*

The first intention was to turn this position, by advancing Sir Rowland's corps from Roncesvalles through S. Jean de Pied-de-Port; this movement would turn the sources of the Nive, threaten Soult's rear, and compel him, it was thought, to abandon his works, and retire beyond Bayonne; but this plan was given up upon full consideration, Soult's line being so short, and the road behind it so good, that he might have it in his power to fall upon Sir Rowland with a superior force, or to attack Sir John Hope when it would be difficult to reinforce either; or he might retire untouched, and keep his army in a condition to continue active and harass the allies in their winter quarters. Lord Wellington resolved, therefore, to strike at the centre of his position, strong as it was, and at the same time to attack the heights of Ainhoë, which were its immediate support, on the left. With this view Sir Rowland had been ordered, as soon as Pamplona should fall, to move leftward, into the valley of Bastan, and the cavalry to close up in his rear in readiness for supporting the right of Beresford's corps at Maya.

The enemy, fully expecting an attack, were always under arms at daybreak, and remained in their redoubts till nightfall; and they improved every day's delay, which the state of the weather afforded them, in strengthening their works, strong as

the labour of three months had already made them. The rain, indeed, continued so many days, and so heavy, that many persons began to fear it would be impossible for them to move; and Lord Wellington, with all his just confidence in himself and in the troops which he commanded, could not but feel how easily human strength and military skill might be baffled by the elements. The weather cleared on the 4th; and on the 7th he met Sir Rowland, Marshal Beresford, and all the chiefs of the right and centre at Urdache, from whence he reconnoitred Ainhoue closely, and pointed out the mode by which that part of the position was to be attacked. The object was to force their centre, and establish the army in rear of their right; and the attack was to be made by columns of divisions, each led by the general officers commanding it, and each forming its own reserve. Sir Rowland directed the movements of the right, consisting of the 2d and 6th divisions, under Sir William Stewart and Sir Henry Clinton, Sir John Hamilton's Portuguese, and Morillo's Spanish division, Colonel Grant's brigade of cavalry, a brigade of Portuguese artillery under Lieutenant-Colonel Tulloh, and three mountain guns under Lieutenant Robe. Marshal Beresford directed the right of the centre, with the 3d, 7th, and 4th divisions, under Major-General Colville, Camp-Marshal Le Cor, and Sir Lowry Cole. Giron was to act on his immediate left with the Andalusian army of reserve. Baron Alten's light division, with three mountain guns, and Longa's corps was to attack La Petite Rhune; Sir Stapleton Cotton to follow the movement of the centre, with General Alten's brigade of cavalry, and three brigades of British artillery. Freyre, with the Galician army, was to move from the heights of Mandale toward Ascain, prevent the enemy from detaching troops from thence to the support of others, and take advantage of any movement which they might make from their

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CHAP. right toward their centre ; and Sir John Hope was to act along  
 XLV. the remainder of their line to the sea.

1813. The 8th was the day intended for the attack, but the state  
 November. of the roads prevented the artillery and some of Sir Rowland's  
 brigades from coming up ; it was postponed therefore till the 10th.  
 This opened with so clear and beautiful a moonlight morning,  
 that it was scarcely perceptible when daylight began to predominate ; and men who had served in India were reminded of an Indian sky. Lord Wellington was on horseback at five, and reached the point of attack at six ; he found Sir Lowry Cole's division at its post, with 18 pieces of cannon at the head of the column : it was on a sloping ridge, which ends in a high point above the village of Sarré ; and on that point was the redoubt which he was to attack, and which had been made with the greatest care, having a deep ditch, an *abattis* in front, and *trous de loup*, so named from their resemblance to the pit-falls in which wolves are taken. Giron was close on his left, and Le Cor on the right, both in valleys. Lord Wellington, Beresford, Sir Lowry, General Colville, and their staffs, were in a little grove, which covered them, about 600 yards from the redoubt, walking about till it was light enough to commence the attack. Sir Lowry then drove in the enemy's piquets, and the horse artillery were enabled to gain the ridge, and open in front of the grove within 400 yards of the redoubt ; their fire in return rattled through the branches ; Colonel Ross dashed forward and opened six guns within 300 yards, which riddled the curtain : the French, however, stood firm, till after about an hour's firing they saw the Spaniards moving to their rear, and the infantry advancing with ladders to escalade them ; they then leaped over the parapet and ran ; . . they were about 300, of whom some twenty were taken in the ditch, and not more than eight or ten killed. The artillery was then rapidly ad-

vanced against the next redoubt on the right, and that cost only about a quarter of an hour, for it was abandoned with discreditable precipitation.

By this time the troops were advancing with great celerity over most difficult ground; Lord Wellington moved on to the first redoubt, from whence he could direct the movements of the Spaniards, and of the 3d, 7th, and 4th divisions; one of those bursts of cheering which electrify the hearers indicated his presence. Beresford advanced with the 3d and 7th, while the Spaniards attacked the village of Sarré by its right, and Sir Lowry turned its left. Downie commanded the battalion of Spaniards to whom this service was assigned, while Giron remained in the valley with a brigade which was to support the light division; and as in that situation it might not be seen when the village was carried, Downie as a signal said he would send his aide-de-camp to toll the church bell. He made the attack with great spirit; the enemy in front of the village made a show of more determination than they kept up, and they rushed from their second line as if ashamed of having too hastily given up the first; but after some skirmishing they retired to the second, and thence from the redoubts and heights cannonaded the assailants. Downie carried the village most gallantly, and the bell tolled: Sir Lowry meantime attacked and carried the works on the low hills in the rear of Sarré, and there halted for orders.

Baron Alten, meanwhile, was equally successful in his operations. He had formed the light division before daylight, in a ravine separating the great and little La Rhune, and within 300 yards of the intrenchments with which the face of La Petite Rhune was covered. Rushing from thence as soon as the day opened, the troops forced line after line; the enemy did not wait in their redoubts to be assaulted; and the assailants having carried all the works, and formed without farther opposition on

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the summit of the hill, were crossing the valley to attack the right of the high range behind Sarré when Lord Wellington reached the point which Sir Lowry had gained. The preliminary attacks having thus succeeded, the whole moved forward against the intrenched range of heights which formed the strongest part of the enemy's position. The Spaniards on Giron's left were not sufficiently alert to support the light division; it was not for some time that the guns could be got up over most difficult ground; part of the 95th, who had gained the first high point, were attacked and obliged to retire; and the enemy had the advantage till the Spaniards, quickened by messages from Lord Wellington, came up; the French then gave way, and the lower ridge, in the centre of the position opposite to our two central columns, was immediately occupied. The Prince of Orange, who was with Lord Wellington that day, was then sent to Marshal Beresford, desiring him to attack that part of the high range in his front, while Sir Lowry should at the same time assail it on his side.

It was now about ten o'clock, and before this simultaneous effort could be made there was time to look at the position which was about to be attacked. The mountain extends about twelve miles from Ascain to Mondarin; only one valley intersects it, which is that through which the Nivelle flows, but there are several dips in the range; every higher point had its redoubt, and in the intervals the enemy were formed in great strength, some in lines, some in columns, with sharpshooters half way down the hills. A friend of Lord Wellington's said at the time to Sir George Murray, that he should expect a very difficult task here, if he had not seen the amazing superiority of our troops in the attack on Sarré: Sir George replied, it is impossible to say how that position may be defended; it is very formidable, but we probably shall get it very easily; when the

French see the red coats they know we are determined to carry our point, and they never dispute it long." The troops justified this brave confidence; six columns began to ascend, with a chain of sharp-shooters in their front; and never could greater intrepidity be displayed than that with which the British and Portuguese advanced against strong works, or solid columns at the top of steep ascents, where they were frequently obliged to use their hands as well as feet in climbing. When they approached a redoubt, they halted a few minutes to take breath; a party was sent to turn it: the sharp-shooters went close up, and another party went straight at it in front, with as much confidence as if to charge a regiment on a plain: when they got within twenty or thirty paces, the enemy uniformly fled, and the assailants being out of breath could overtake but few of them. Most of these redoubts had a glacis, with an *abattis* in front, which gave them time to get off. From one large one, which was attacked by the 21st Portuguese regiment, the garrison continued to fire till the assailants jumped into the ditch; then the French hastened out at the rear with all alacrity.

Lord Wellington ascended in the interval between the 7th and 4th divisions. Just as he reached the summit of the range at one of its dips, Beresford and Colville, with the 3d division, had carried a very high hill, crowned with a strong stockaded redoubt, which was, in fact, the key of the position, and looked down upon the whole range on both sides. The 40th suffered here from having pushed on too fast. The allies were now gaining the upper ridge on all sides, and the artillery attempted to follow: Ross's troop was the only one which succeeded, and that by two hours of the utmost exertion, and by partly making a road. Sir Lowry, with the 4th division, reached the top at a lower part: two brigades of the enemy were formed upon a

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 XLV. above Ascaïn, was a large and strong redoubt, manned by a  
 1813. battalion of infantry. The light division was toiling up the  
 November. hill to the right of this work, and the Spaniards to the left.  
 Sir Lowry attacked the brigades; there were two generals at  
 their heads; but when the assailants came near, the French  
 fired five or six rounds in rather an unsoldier-like hurry, and  
 then moved hastily off, leaving the redoubt to its fate. Downie,  
 seizing a colour, and waving it as he advanced on horseback at  
 the head of his battalion, led on his men; they went against it gal-  
 lantly, in spite of their officers, who behaved ill; the light division  
 commenced an attack upon it, in which Colonel Barnard was  
 wounded; and the 52d lost a good many men here, before Lord  
 Wellington's orders for desisting and summoning the garrison  
 could arrive. While this attack continued, the troops under  
 Beresford got so far in the rear of the redoubt, that it was  
 impossible for the garrison to retreat. They proved to be the  
 first battalion of the 88th regiment, nearly 600 strong: their  
 colonel had been promoted for his defence of St. Christoval's, at  
 the first siege of Badajoz: he hesitated, parleyed, and re-  
 quested to confer with his officers, and subsequently with the  
 non-commissioned officers; but it was in vain to resist, and  
 there was no way to escape; so they surrendered, and laid  
 down their arms on the glacis. Some of the men expressed  
 their indignation in coarse and indecent language at finding  
 themselves prisoners; and one serjeant, in particular, who  
 wore the cross of the Legion of Honour, cursed his fortune,  
 that after being present in the battles of Austerlitz and Wagram,  
 he should now be captured in a redoubt!

While these operations were going on in the centre, Sir  
 Henry Clinton, with the 6th division, having driven in the enemy's  
 piquets on both banks of the Nivelle, crossed that river, covered