

the passage of Sir John Hamilton's Portuguese division, and ascended the hill in line, scarcely firing a shot. The enemy were formed on the top of the hill, as on a fine parade, in front of their huts, and with strong redoubts on both flanks. The first party in its eagerness pushed on too fast, and was driven back; but as the support came near they dashed forward again; and the enemy, having thrown away their fire, went off in great confusion, abandoning redoubts, camp, and all. Sir William Stewart's division carried a work on a parallel ridge in the rear. Morillo, by attacking the enemy's posts on the slopes of Mondarin, and following them towards Itzatce, covered the advance of the whole to the heights behind Ainhoue. Sir Rowland then forced the enemy to retire from those heights towards the bridge of Cambo on the Nivelle; and Sir William Stewart drove a division from Mondarin into the mountains toward Baygorri. By two o'clock the allies had gained possession of the whole of the position behind Sarré and Ainhoue.

The enemy, who had been in front of our centre, were now retiring along the road to St. Pé, a village on the Nivelle, between three and four miles distant. The nature of the country rendered it impossible to cut them off; and Lord Wellington was obliged to wait an hour, that the troops might take breath, and to see that the operations on the right had succeeded; and that the 6th division, after carrying the works in its front, had inclined to the left, and closed upon the third. This having been ascertained, about three o'clock, he directed the 7th and 3d divisions (being the right of the centre) to move by the left of the river upon St. Pé, and the 6th by the right upon the same place; while the 4th and light divisions, with Giron's reserve, held the heights above Ascaïn, covering the movement on that side, and Sir Rowland covered it on the

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CHAP. other: The Nivelle is from twenty to thirty yards wide, rapid
 XLV. like a mountain stream, and not fordable; there is a stone bridge
 1813. at St. Pé, a wooden one half a mile lower down, and a stone
 November. one about the same distance still lower, at the village of Ayan.
 The first of these bridges was eagerly contested; but, after
 some severe skirmishing, the allies effected the passage of all
 three. Lord Wellington halted upon the heights above St. Pé;
 and, having occupied the bridges and the villages, waited there
 for reports from the right and left. During the whole day he
 could distinctly hear, and generally see, the firing on the right,
 Sir Rowland's quarter; but the projecting base of La Rhune
 entirely prevented him from seeing what passed on Sir John
 Hope's side; and a steady breeze, setting toward the sea,
 prevented any sound from reaching him in that direction. But
 on that side there could be no anxiety, for it was not intended
 to be the scene of serious action; and what service was to be per-
 formed there, was performed well. The French had constructed
 a redoubt round the ruins of a small chapel on a hill, and con-
 nected it with the defence of Urogne by intrenchments, and a
 strong *abattis*. From this work, which formed a sort of ad-
 vanced post to their right wing, Sir John Hope drove them,
 and from Urogne, and pushed forward the 5th division to the
 inundation which covered the intrenchments in front of Ciboure,
 and those protecting the heights in advance of Fort Socoa. The
 enemy were kept in expectation here that this position would
 be assaulted; and they were menaced in their intrenchments,
 which covered the heights behind Urogne, and extended along
 the hills in the direction of Ascain: that village they abandoned
 in the afternoon, and Freyre took possession of it. As soon as
 Lord Wellington had received the reports, he gave orders for
 attacking the heights behind St. Pé; they were of difficult
 access, through vineyards, and were crowned with woods; and

the enemy had a considerable force there: during the intervals of severer action, the sharp-shooters had been warmly engaged in the village, and along the river; and shrapnells had been thrown at the heights with visible effect from Ross's brigade. The 3d division now crossed near the village, the 6th advanced upon its right, and the 7th attacked the left of the heights; the brunt of the action on this side was borne by this division. The 51st and 68th regiments, light troops, scoured a wood in full cry, like a pack of hounds, and drove out a large body of sharp-shooters, whom they drove up the hills, but with so much eagerness as to leave their support behind. Instantly upon this advantage being presented, a strong column moved from behind the hill and attacked them; the enemy were led by a general officer on horseback, and behaved with more spirit than they had shown in any other part of the engagement. The two regiments, if they had not been two of the best, must have been cut to pieces; but though they were very weak in numbers, and were driven back, they formed in close order, and in the most gallant manner retook the hill. This was the last business of the day; the three divisions took post on the heights beyond St. Pé, thus establishing themselves in the rear of the enemy's right; and the remainder of the army rested on the ground which they occupied, the evening being so far advanced that no farther movement could be made.

Lord Wellington was on the heights above St. Pé before daylight; the morning was hazy, and it was noon before he received the reports which enabled him to put the troops in motion. During the night the enemy had abandoned all their works and positions in front of S. Jean de Luz, and, knowing no time was to be lost, lest the divisions at S. Pé should interpose between them and Bayonne, retired upon Bidart,

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1813. *November.* destroying all the bridges on the lower Nivelle. Sir John Hope followed with the left, as soon as he could cross the river; but it was mid-day before he could repair the bridge which connects Ciboure with S. Jean de Luz, and construct a flying bridge to expedite the passage of the troops. The 5th division passed here, part with the artillery by the bridge, part by fords close above the town; the first, with Wilson's Portuguese brigade by a ford about a mile higher up, and broad enough for the men to cross by platoons. It rained most heavily; the water was deep, the opposite bank muddy, and the shore swampy ground: but no opposition was offered, and the men, elated by the signal success of yesterday, were in high spirits. The centre moved forward about a league, and the right made a corresponding move, which was as far as the state of the roads, after so violent a fall of rain, would allow. Soult showed about 16,000 men at Bidart all day. The army bivouacked a second night. On the following morning Lord Wellington was again in front of the centre at daybreak, but a thick fog enveloped every thing; it was noon before it cleared, and he then learned that the enemy had retired during the night into an intrenched camp, in front of Bayonne.

By these operations, in which the allies lost little more than 500 killed, and less than 2400 wounded, the French were driven from positions strong in themselves, and which they had been fortifying with great skill and great labour for six months. 51 pieces of cannon, 1500 prisoners, and 400 wounded, were taken. Soult had full 70,000 men; but though there was no flight, nor any thing like a rout, no determined spirit of resistance was manifested; they fought like brave men, but dispirited ones, and in several instances their officers used every endeavour to bring them on in vain. They had relied upon the difficulty of the ground, not dreaming that artillery could be brought to

act against them over rivers and rocks and mountains; and, indeed, the allies were beholden for their success, in no slight degree, to the extraordinary skill and activity with which this part of the service was directed by Colonel Dickson. Mountain-pieces on swivel carriages, harnessed on the backs of mules which had been trained for the purpose, were conveyed to the ridges of the mountains, and brought to bear on the French from positions which they had considered inaccessible for guns... The foot and horse-artillery were alike active and expert; and the artillery-men dragged their cannon with ropes up steep precipices, or lowered them down, wherever they could be employed with most effect. Generals Byng and Kempt were wounded: Colonel Lloyd of the 94th, an officer of great promise, and who had frequently distinguished himself, was killed.

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The weather, which continued wet, without intermission, from the 11th to the 18th, rendered the cross-roads so bad, and the streams so formidable, that Lord Wellington could not follow up his success as he would otherwise have done. He placed the army, therefore, in cantonments between the Nivelle and the sea; but as the enemy were concentrated in great numbers round Bayonne, two miles only in their immediate front, a defensive line was formed against any sudden advance. It commenced at the sea on the left, in rear of Biarits, passed over the main ridge of heights, and crossed the high road, near a country house belonging to the mayor of that little town. The front of this part of the line was protected by the two small lakes of Chuhigue and Rousta; the high road passes across a valley between them, and here was the most advanced line of sentinels guarding the left wing; from thence it followed the right bank of the valley, in front of Arcangues, and coming there upon the Nive, near a chateau belonging to Garat (one

*The allies
cantonned be-
tween the
Nivelle and
the sea.*

CHAP. of the contemporary historians of the French revolution, and
 XLV. himself an actor in it), it was thrown back along the left of that
 1813. river by Arrauntz, Ustaritz, Larressore, and Cambo; from
 which latter place the enemy, who occupied a tête-de-pont
 there, withdrew their posts on the 18th, and blew up the bridge.
 Head-quarters were at S. Jean de Luz, a town which dates its
 decay from the peace of 1763, when France was deprived of
 its possessions in North America. The Nivelle divides it from
 Ciboure (a smaller town), spreading just above both into
 a beautiful bay, and forming an island where it spreads, which
 is connected by bridges with both. The bay terminates on the
 north-east by a rocky point of land, on which a battery called
 Fort St. Barbe was erected, and on the opposite side is the
 harbour of Socoa, defended by a martello tower. Between these
 points the bay is nearly a mile in width, and on both sides a
 pier had been begun, which it was intended to have carried so
 nearly across, as only to have left a sufficient entrance, and thus
 to have afforded safe anchorage on this stormy coast, where it is
 grievously needed. When the Spanish fleet was wrecked here
 in 1627, the dead who were cast up on the immediate shores
 filled ninety-six carts. On that occasion the inhabitants of
 S. Jean de Luz behaved with exemplary kindness to the
 survivors; and it was proposed in the Spanish council that, as
 a becoming acknowledgment, its ships and merchants should
 enjoy a perpetual exemption from all duties in Portugal,
 whither they traded largely for salt: I wish it could be added,
 that such a proof of national gratitude had been given. During
 the action of the 10th, a naval demonstration was made opposite
 Fort Socoa, by four of Sir George Collier's squadrons; the swell
 would not admit of a close approach, but they came near
 enough for one of them to be struck by some shot from the
 sea-batteries.

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S. Jean de
Luz.

D. Fran-
cesco Ma-
noel.
Epanapho-
ras, p. 256.

The inhabitants of S. Jean de Luz had mostly remained in their own houses, shutting themselves up there to abide their fate, in dread of invaders whom they had been taught to consider as being equally rapacious and merciless. There was still a disposition in the allied troops to take that license which brutal spirits promise themselves in war; but, during the action of the 10th, two offenders had been hanged, each upon the nearest tree to the spot where his crime was committed, with a paper upon his breast declaring for what offence this summary justice had been executed. Such severity was equally politic and just; and the allies soon acquired as good a character for their conduct toward the inhabitants as for their behaviour in the field. The people were the more sensible of this, because it was strikingly contrasted with the predatory habits in which their own troops had long been licensed, and which those troops had not laid aside when they were driven within the French frontier. Marshal Soult would gladly now have withheld them from courses which he had so long permitted or encouraged; and just at this time an instance occurred in which he endeavoured to strike terror by a wholesome example. When they were quitting S. Jean de Luz, a woman complained to an officer whose company was quartered there, that the men, expecting to depart, were beginning to plunder her house: he gave no ear to her entreaties that he would restrain them, and the woman at length, in her emotion at seeing her goods thus given up to spoil, exclaimed, that "if those who ought to be their defenders would not protect them, the English might as well be there at once." "Oh!" said the officer, "if you are a friend to the English, you shall see how I will protect you!" and immediately he set fire to her house himself. A *gendarme* who was present took the woman's part; and declared that though he could not take the officer into custody, nor prevent him by force, he would report the circumstance to the

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 1813. Marshal: he did so; and the officer, who was a captain of infantry and a member of the Legion of Honour, was brought to a court-martial, condemned, and shot.

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turn to their
homes.

But it was too late for Marshal Soult to correct the inveterate habits of men who, during all their campaigns in the Peninsula, had been supported by a predatory system; and though most of the people, and especially the villagers, forsook their houses at the approach of the allies, yet, when proclamations were issued in French and in Basque (which is the language of these parts), assuring them that their persons and property should be respected, and when they understood that British discipline would afford them a security which it was in vain to hope for amid their own armies, they returned. The French authorities endeavoured in vain to dissuade them; the general wish was expressed so strongly, that at length no farther impediment was opposed to it than that of forbidding them to carry back any thing with them. Above 3000 persons came back to S. Jean de Luz and the neighbouring places before the end of November, and as many more passed through the line of the allied out-posts, in one day early in December, on their return; . . . among them were several young men, escaping in women's clothes from the conscription.

The weather had prevented Lord Wellington from passing the Nive, as he intended to have done, immediately after having forced the French position, and the army in consequence occupied only the confined space on the left of that river; while the enemy profited by all the resources of the country on its right, and had a free communication between Bayonne and S. Jean de Pied-de-Port. They occupied an intrenched camp in front of Bayonne, about twelve miles from S. Jean de Luz, and this position they had been fortifying with provident care from the time of their defeat at Vittoria. Bayonne obtained its

Bayonne.

present name in the twelfth century, till when it was called Lapurdum, as when the cohort of Novempopulania had its headquarters there. This ancient city, which during three centuries belonged to our Plantagenet kings, is memorable in military history for the invention of the bayonet, a weapon that in its name indicates the place of its origin, and that, in British hands, has proved more destructive than any other to the nation by which it was invented. In the war of the French revolution this city would not have been tenable against a single division of an enemy's army: the war of the intrusion made it immediately a place of great importance, as a depôt for the French; and therefore it was well fortified, to secure it against a sudden attack from the English, before the possibility of any more serious danger had been contemplated. It stands at the junction of the Nive with the Adour; the latter a great river, and the former not fordable for several miles up: the city is on the left of the Adour, the citadel on the other side. The position which Marshal Soult occupied was under the fire of the fortress; the right resting on the Adour, and covered in front by a morass, formed by a rivulet which falls into that river. The right of the centre rested upon the same morass, and its left upon the Nive; the left was between the Nive and the Adour, resting on the latter river and defending the former, and communicating with a division of the army of Catalonia, under General Paris, at St. Jean de Pied-de-Port. The roads from that place, and from S. Jean de Luz to Paris, pass through Bayonne; and these are the only paved roads, all the others are so bad as to be impracticable in winter. The enemy had their advanced posts, from their right, in front of Anglet, and toward Biarritz; and they had a considerable corps cantoned in Ville-Franche and Monguerre.

As soon as the weather and the state of the roads allowed, preparations were made for crossing the Nive. On the 8th of

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*Passage of
the Nive.*