

THE
WAR IN THE PENINSULA

CLEZELER HOPES SHARD

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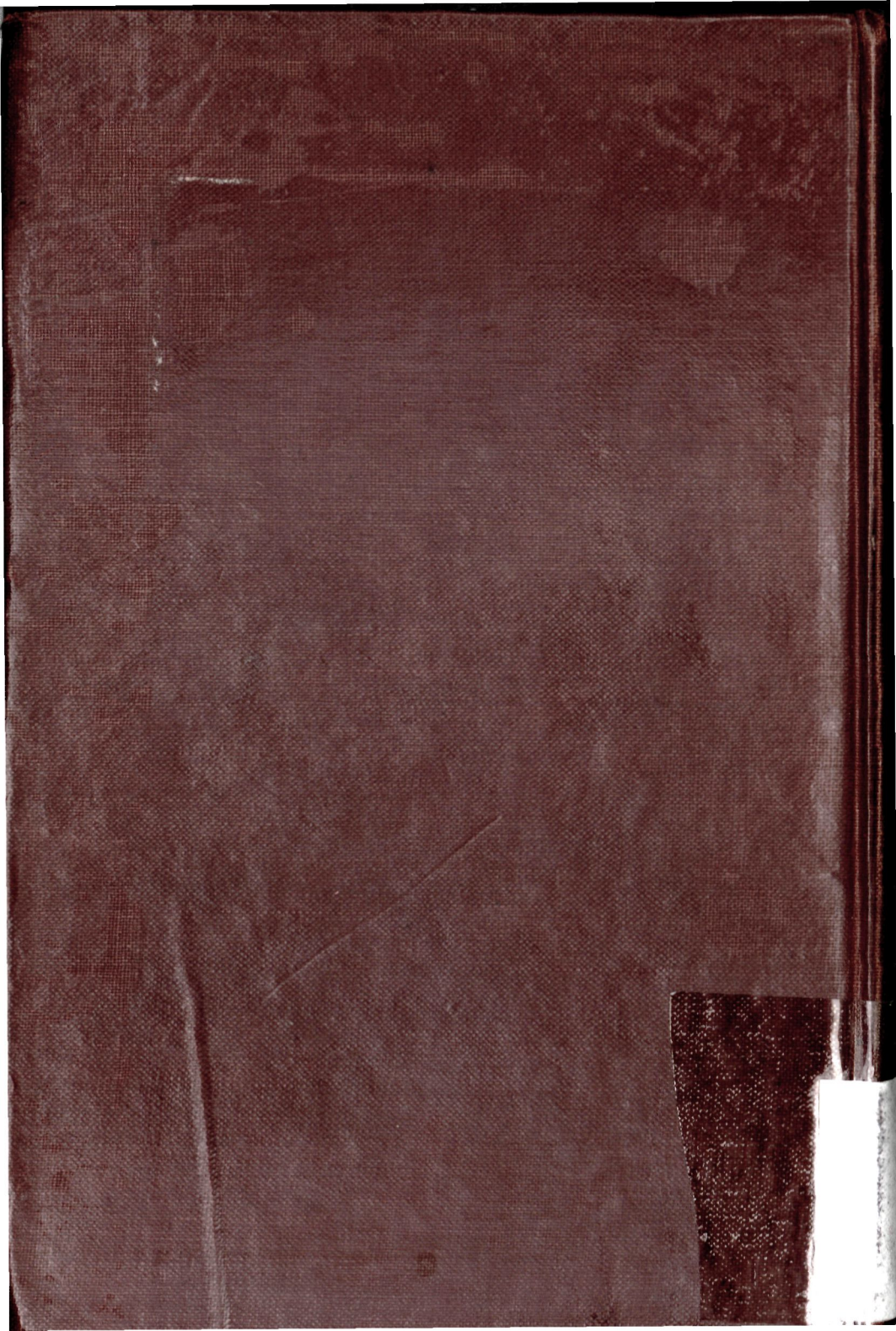
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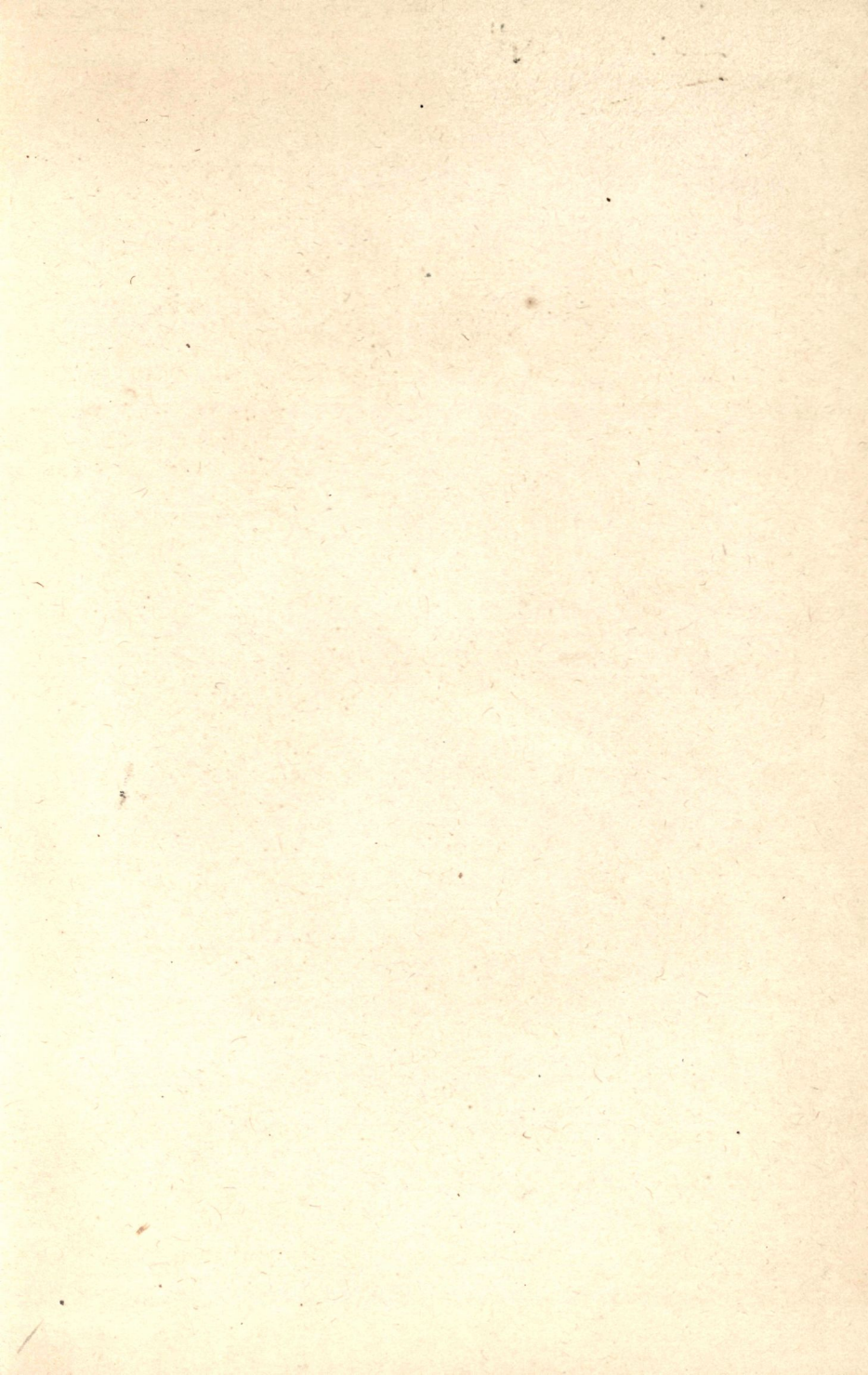
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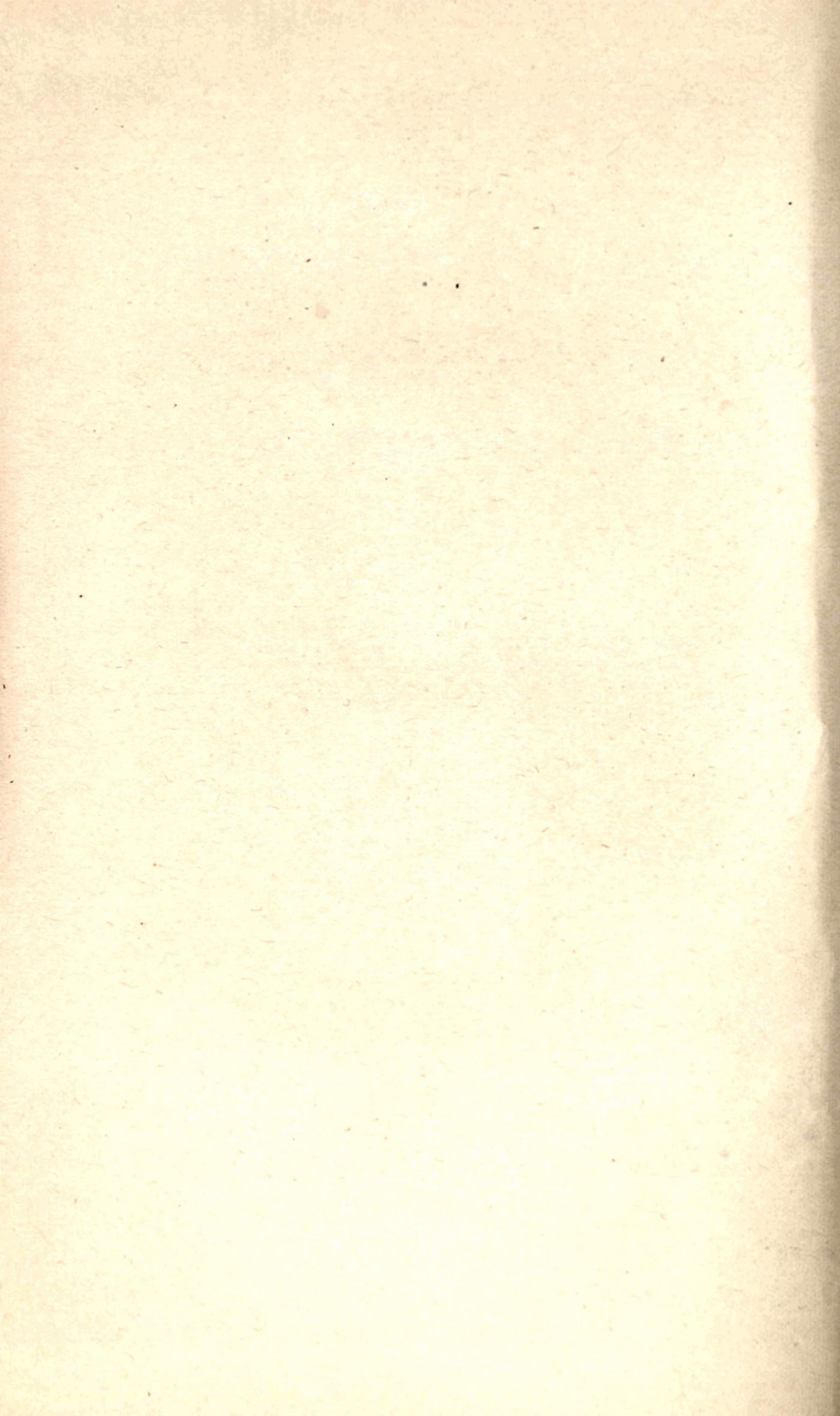
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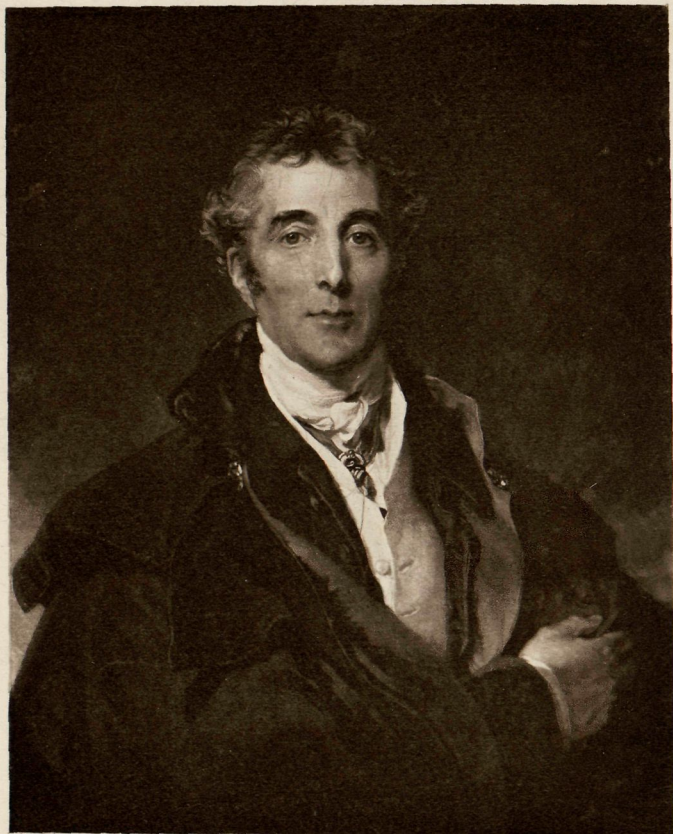






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Sir Lawrence, mnx.

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The Duke of Wellington.

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THE WAR
IN THE PENINSULA

1808-1814

BY

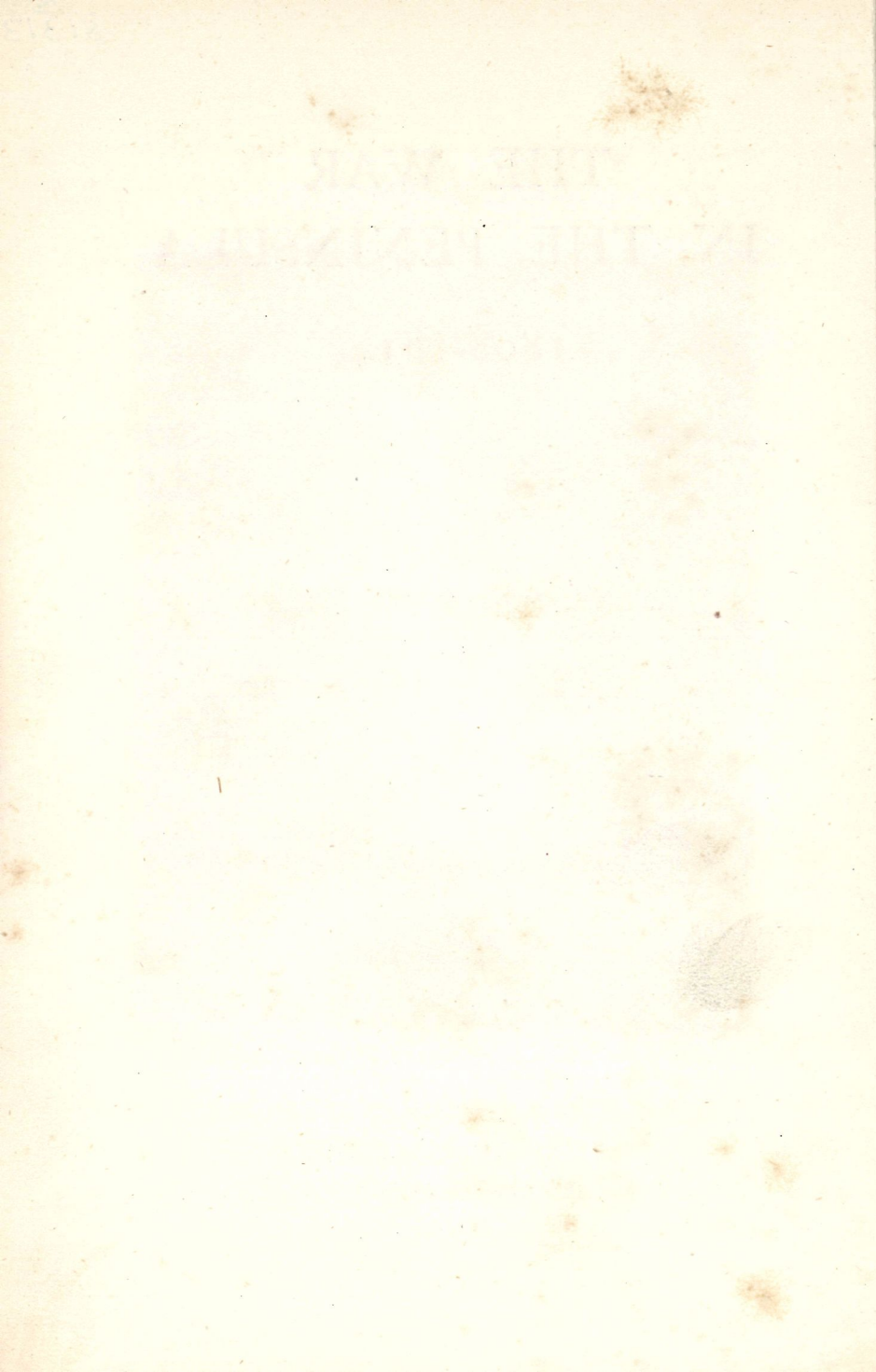
ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

Author of 'The Life of Sir Edward Hamley'



With Portraits and Plans

LONDON
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NECESSARILY this condensed narrative is based on Napier, the historian of the War, and on the Wellington Despatches. Southey and other English writers have been consulted, and references will be found in the text to the Memoirs of French soldiers who served in the campaigns, and to the observations of the Emperor himself at St Helena. Perhaps I may add that I had the advantage of talking over some of those 'Operations of War' with the late Sir Edward Hamley, though, as I must trust to memory for the recollection of the conversations, he is not to be held responsible for opinions expressed.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS

CHAPTER I

- ^{1806.}
Nov. 21.—Publication of the Berlin Decree—First Step towards establishing Continental System.
- ^{1807.}
Oct. 18.—Entrance of French Army into Spain for invasion of Portugal.
Oct. 27.—Secret Treaty of Fontainebleau for partition of Portugal.
Nov. 27.—Junot enters Lisbon.
- ^{1808.}
Jan. —Spanish fortresses on frontier seized by the French.
Feb. 27.—Napoleon demands cession of districts north of Ebro in exchange for Portugal.
Mar. 18.—Riots at Aranjuez and fall of Godoy.
" 19.—Charles IV. abdicates in favour of his son.
" 23.—French under Murat enter Madrid.
April 11.—Ferdinand leaves Madrid for France.
May 2.—Insurrection at Madrid—Massacre of the French revenged with great cruelty and summary military executions.
" 4.—Murat named Lieutenant-General of Spain.
" 5.—Charles, by Treaty of Bayonne, surrenders Crown to Napoleon.
" 6.—Ferdinand abdicates.

CHAPTER II

- May 24.—Insurrection of Asturias and establishment of Provincial Juntas.
" 24.—Gallician Junta proclaims war and sends deputies to ask the assistance of England.
June 6.—Napoleon bestows the Crown on his brother Joseph.
" 15.—Beginning of first siege of Zaragoza.
" 22.—Duhesme retreats from Gerona.
" 29.—Moncey retreats from Valencia.

- July 14.—Battle of Rio Seco.
 „ 20.—Joseph enters Madrid as King.
 „ 20.—Battle of Baylen.
 „ 30.—Joseph leaves Madrid.

CHAPTER III

- July 12.—Expedition under Sir A. Wellesley sails for Corunna.
 Aug. 1.—Landing of troops in Mondego Bay.
 „ 17.—Battle of Roliça.
 „ 21.—Battle of Vimeiro.
 „ 30.—Convention of Cintra signed at Torres Vedras.

CHAPTER IV

- Sept. 25.—Central Junta assembles at Madrid.
 Oct. 6.—Despatch from London arrives in Lisbon with a plan of campaign.
 „ 26.—Moore marches from Lisbon—The Marquis of Romana and Mr Frere land in Galicia.
 Nov. 10.—Battle of Gamonal.
 „ 11.—Battle of Espinosa.
 „ 23.—Battle of Tudela.
 „ 30.—Forcing of the Somosierra Pass.
 Dec. 4.—Napoleon captures Madrid.
^{1809.}
 Jan. 14.—Treaty of Alliance with the Supreme Junta.
 „ 16.—Battle of Corunna.

CHAPTER V

- ^{1808.}
 Dec. 20.—Beginning of second siege of Zaragoza.
^{1809.}
 Jan. 10.—Bombardment begins.
 „ 22.—Marshal Lannes takes command.
 Feb. 21.—The city surrenders.
 Mar. 3.—General Beresford arrives in Portugal to take command of the native troops.
 „ 27.—Sebastiani routs Cartoajula at Ciudad Real.
 „ 28.—Victor routs Cuesta at Medellin.

CHAPTER VI

- Mar. 28.—Soult storms Oporto.
 May 6.—Wellesley concentrates at Coimbra.
 „ 12.—He crosses the Douro and takes Oporto.

CHAPTER VII

- May 12.—Sir Arthur Wellesley enters Spain.
July 27, 28.—Battle of Talavera.
Aug. 11.—Venegas routed at Almonacid.
Nov. 3.—Areizaga begins his march.
" 16.—Rout of Ocaña.
" 28.—Duke del Parque defeated at Alba de Tormes.
Dec. 11.—Capitulation of Gerona.

CHAPTER VIII

- ^{1810.}
Jan. 24.—Seville revolts against the Junta.
April —Masséna appointed to command of army of Portugal.
" —French appear before Ciudad Rodrigo.
July 11.—Surrender of Ciudad Rodrigo.
Aug. 28.—Surrender of Almeida.
Sept. 27.—Battle of Busaco.

CHAPTER IX.

- Oct. 12.—Wellington enters the lines of Torres Vedras.
^{1811.}
Mar. 6.—Masséna retreats from Santarem.
" 7.—Battle of Barossa.
April 1.—Wellington following Masséna returns to the Coa.
May 3, 5.—Battle of Fuentes d'Oñoro.
" 16.—Battle of Albuera.

CHAPTER X

- ^{1812.}
Jan. 8.—Wellington lays siege to Ciudad Rodrigo.
" 19.—He captures it.
Mar. 16.—He lays siege to Badajoz.
April 6.—Badajoz is stormed.

CHAPTER XI

- ^{1810.}
May 14.—Suchet captures Lerida.
^{1811.}
Jan. 1.—He captures Tortosa.
April 9.—The Spaniards surprise Figueras.
June 28.—Suchet captures Tarragona.

CHAPTER XII

- ^{1812.}
May 19.—Hill captures Almaraz.

CHAPTER XIII

- June 17.—Wellington enters Salamanca, and the army passes the Tormes to San Christoval.
 „ 27.—The Forts of Salamanca are taken, and Marmont retires behind the Douro.
 July 16.—Marmont recrosses the river.
 „ 17.—Engagement on the Trabancos.
 „ 20.—Marmont turns the Allies and returns to the Tormes.
 „ 21.—Wellington passes the Lower Tormes.
 „ 22.—Combats at the Arapiles.

CHAPTER XIV

- July 22.—Battle of Salamanca.
 „ 30.—Wellington enters Valladolid.
 „ 31.—He recrosses the Douro, and establishes his headquarters at Cuellar.
 Aug. 13.—He enters Madrid.
 „ 24.—Siege of Cadiz is raised.
 Sept. 1.—Wellington leaves Madrid.
 „ 19.—First attack on Burgos.

CHAPTER XV

- Oct. 21.—Wellington retires from Burgos.
 Nov. 1.—Madrid being evacuated, the French enter.
 „ 6.—Wellington falls back on Salamanca.
 „ 18.—He arrives at Ciudad Rodrigo.

CHAPTER XVI

- Nov. 24.—Miranda surrenders Alba de Tormes.
 „ 24.—Wellington, having gone into winter quarters in Portugal, issues his circular of reproof.
 Dec. 3.—Joseph recovers Madrid.
 „ —Wellington makes a journey to Cadiz and Lisbon.

CHAPTER XVII

- ^{1813.}
 April 10.—The French again evacuate Madrid.
 „ 13.—Battle of Castalla.

CHAPTER XVIII

- May 26.—Wellington reappears before Salamanca.
June 1.—The Allies enter Zamora.
„ 21.—Battle of Vittoria.

CHAPTER XIX

- June 25.—Tolosa is taken.
July 10.—Zaragoza is recovered.
„ 13.—Siege of San Sebastian begun.
„ 25.—The assaults fail, and the siege is turned to a blockade.

CHAPTER XX

- July 13.—Soult returns to Bayonne as Commander-in-Chief.
„ 25.—Beginning of the battles of the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles and Maya.
„ 27, 28.—Battles of Sauroren.
„ 30.—Battle of Buenza.

CHAPTER XXI

- Aug. 26.—Second siege of San Sebastian.
„ 31.—Battle at San Marcial.
Sept. 10.—The fortress surrenders.
„ 12.—Suchet defeats Lord William Bentinck at Ordal.

CHAPTER XXII

- Oct. 7.—Passage of the Bidassoa.
„ 31.—Surrender of Pamplona.
Nov. 10.—Battle of the Nivelle.

CHAPTER XXIII

- Dec. 8.—The allies advance on the Nive.
„ 9-11 —Fighting before Bayonne.
„ 11.—Treaty of Valançay.
„ 12.—Battle of St Pierre.
^{1814.}
Feb. —Surrender of the Eastern Fortresses through Van Halen's treachery.
Mar. 24.—Ferdinand returns to Spain.
April 8.—Suchet returns to France.

CHAPTER XXIV

- Feb. 21-24.—Passage of the Adour below Bayonne.
„ 25.—Bayonne invested.
„ 27.—Battle of Orthes.
Mar. 12.—Bordeaux admits the allies.

CHAPTER XXV

- Mar. 20.—Battle of Tarbes.
April 10.—Battle of Toulouse.
„ 14.—Sortie from Bayonne.
„ 19.—Sault signs a Convention for the suspension of hostilities.

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The War in the Peninsula

INTRODUCTION

THE dramas of great wars must always have an irresistible fascination. Students who follow them intelligently are absorbed even more in the results of well-devised strategy or prompt decisions than in the swift vicissitudes of thrilling episodes or eventful situations. Moreover, combinations and events are always at the mercy of Chance, and, as Napier says, in war Fortune *will* assert her supremacy. It is true that in the wars of the past the catastrophe is foreknown, which eliminates the elements of suspense and expectation. But, on the other hand, the subject has been flooded with light from a host of historians, military and civil; history has been as thoroughly revised as can be reasonably expected, and we have the feeling that we are dealing with actual facts and not with probabilities or hazardous presumptions.

There is a remarkable variety of interests attaching to the Peninsular War, and it must always have a special attraction for Englishmen. It was the turning point of the fortunes of Napoleon, and the conqueror of Europe took the first step towards political suicide when he rashly decided to pass the Pyrenees. Britain was supreme on the seas; Buonaparte had made himself master of the Continent. After the peace of Tilsit, it is impossible to surmise how the map of Europe might have been re-cast

had he been satisfied to rest on the maxim, *quieta non movere*. But his ambition was boundless as his self-confidence was not unreasonably overweening. He could feel himself neither satisfied nor safe so long as England was prosperous and consequently formidable. While circumstances gave her the monopoly of commerce, she could subsidise his unwilling tributaries, and encourage them to fresh efforts for independence. The fighting which began at Vimeiro and ended at Waterloo was really a prolonged battle for markets. The insurrections in Spain and Portugal were merely episodes which influenced the direction and course of operations. The decree of Berlin, followed by the decree of Milan in December 1807, had declared England in a state of blockade. The immediate response was the Orders in Council. France and the countries dependent on her were to be blockaded in turn. All vessels trading between hostile or neutral ports, or under such a certificate as was required by the decree of Berlin, were declared liable to seizure; and neutral ships, bound to or from any hostile port, were required to touch and pay duties at some port in Great Britain. Then the combatants found themselves face to face. Buonaparte could close the northern harbours, though smugglers and receivers drove a thriving trade, but the prohibited goods were poured into the Peninsula through the free port of Gibraltar, and notably through Portugal; in fact, Portugal, as historians of the time have defined it, was but an outlying province of our own. Portuguese independence must be suppressed if the continental system was to be effectively carried out. Hence the secret treaty of Fontainebleau, which tempted its author to the invasion of Spain. We are far from asserting that our country, and even our Cabinets, were not actuated by nobler

and more generous motives. They sympathised warmly with the revolt of the Peninsular nations against unprovoked invasion and intolerable oppression. They were indignant at the arbitrary pressure put on their ally, the Regent of Portugal, and shocked by the treachery which, having secured the Spanish fortresses under the guise of friendship, had ensnared the whole of the royal family at Bayonne. But free commerce was the very life-blood of the British Isles, and when they embarked the first detachment of troops for the Peninsula, they committed themselves to a death-struggle from which the will and the victories of Wellington made it difficult and well-nigh impossible to draw back.

Buonaparte's motives for the conquest of Portugal were clear, and had he been content to stop there his schemes might have been successful. But his aggression on Spain was so ill-timed and ill-advised that it is difficult to reconcile it with the far-sighted sagacity of his genius. His warmest admirers have sought in vain to explain his reasons or defend his policy. He appears to have been drawn on, step by step, to take resolutions from which he could not recede without compromising his prestige and his reputation for infallibility. Warning after warning came to him in vain, sign after sign was disregarded. Ségur marvels at the blindness which failed to foresee that the rising of the 2d of May in Madrid was the spark which could only be extinguished beneath the ruins of his crumbling empire. Escoiquiz, the able though servile envoy of Ferdinand and the Council of Castille, summoned courage at the last to speak out like a sage and a patriot. With rare prescience he described all the difficulties and troubles which would beset the invaders; he predicted the consequences of the inevitable interposition of the English, although he could

not foretell that they would be commanded by Wellington. But when he spoke it was towards the eleventh hour, and the autocrat refused to listen. Already Joseph had peremptory orders to exchange the crown of Naples for that of Spain, though Joseph knew he was being sacrificed to his brother's ambition, and would have refused had he possessed the nerve and wealth of his brother, the Prince of Canino.

Had his statecraft not failed him for once, Napoleon might have governed Spain, for a time at least, through the Bourbons, leaving Charles or Ferdinand a shadowy supremacy. When they called him in to arbitrate in the scandals of the palace, they had abdicated all free will and placed themselves absolutely at his disposition. The Prince of Peace, the all-powerful favourite, trembling for the consequences of his contumacy before the battle of Jena, was his obsequious tool, ready to sell his master and the liberties of the nation. Doubtless the prudent course was Napoleon's first idea. But with more familiar knowledge his contempt had increased for the senile king and the hereditary prince. He saw that the courtiers and aristocracy were corrupt to the core; that the ministers and place-hunters were venal as Godoy, and would have been as base had they enjoyed Godoy's opportunities. It seemed well to get rid altogether of a dynasty, who might easily be intimidated but were never to be trusted. And it would be as gratifying to his ambition as to his pride to succeed where Louis the Grand had failed, to efface the Pyrenees and to annex another kingdom for the aggrandisement of the Buonapartes.

He reckoned without the Spanish nation, and, strange to say, he seems to have taken slight account of the remarkable defensible capabilities of the country. He