dreadful state, and the continued misconduct of the Regency, and the absolute want of money, gave little hope of amelioration. It was therefore impossible to take a position beyond the Agueda.

The dépôts were now re-established at Lamego on the Douro, and at Raiva on the Mondego, and magazines of consumption were formed at Celerico, from whence the mule-brigades brought up the provisions by the way of Castello Bom. Measures were also taken at Guarda, Peña Macor, and Castello Branco, to form commissariat establishments which were to be supplied from Abrantes; but the transport of stores was difficult, and this consideration, combined with the capricious nature of the Agueda and Coa, rendered it dangerous to blockade both Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida; seeing that the troops would have those rivers behind them, while the position itself would be weak and extended. The blockade of Almeida was undertaken because, from intercepted letters and other sources, it was known to have provisions only for a fortnight, but Lord Wellington was prepared to relinquish it if pressed, because it formed no part of the plan which he contemplated.

The success in Portugal had given stability to the English ministers, and it would appear that they were satisfied, and at first meant to limit their future efforts to the defence of that country, for Lord Liverpool now required the return of many battalions. But offensive warfare in Spain occupied the General's thoughts, and two lines of operation had presented themselves to his mind.* 1. Under the supposition that it would be long ere Massena could again make any serious attempt on Portugal, to remain on the defensive in Beira, and march against the army of the south to raise the siege of Cadiz. 2. If Almeida fell to the blockade, to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo; if Almeida did not so fall, to besiege both together; if they were taken, to march at once into the heart of Spain and open a communication with Valencia and with the army of Sicily. This great and lofty conception would have delivered Andalusia as certainly as any direct operation; for thus Madrid, the great dépôt of the French, would have been taken, the northern and southern armies cut asunder, and the English base momentarily fixed on the Mediterranean coast; then the whole of the Spanish and British force could have been concentrated, and one or two great battles must have decided the fate of Spain.

Filled with this grand project, Lord Wellington demanded reinforcements from England, and leave to carry his designs into execution if occasion offered; yet he checked his secret aspirations when reflecting upon the national pride and perverseness of the Spaniards, on their uncertain proceedings, and the great difficulty,

* Lord Wellington to Lord Liverpool, May 7th, 1810, MS.

if not impossibility, of insuring any reasonable concert and assistance. When to this he added the bad disposition of the Portuguese Regency, and the timid temper of the English ministers, so many jarring elements were presented, that he could make no fixed combinations. Nevertheless, maturing the leading points of action in his own mind, he resolved to keep them in view, adapting his proceedings to circumstances as they should arise.

His projects were, however, necessarily conditional, because if Napoleon reinforced his armies again, new combinations would be created; and before any other measure, it was essential to recapture Badajos. The loss of that place had affected the safety of Cadiz, and it interfered with the execution of both the above mentioned plans, and with the safety of Portugal, by enabling the enemy to besiege Elvas. So deeply and sagaciously, however, had the English General probed the nature of the contest, that we shall find his after operations strictly conformable to these his first conceptions, and always successful.

Judging now that Massena would be unable to interrupt the blockade of Almeida, Lord Wellington left the command of the northern army to General Spencer and departed for the Alemtejo, where Beresford was operating; but, as this was one of the most critical periods of the war, it is essential to have a clear notion of the true state of affairs in the south at the moment when Beresford commenced his memorable campaign.

Soult returned to Andalusia immediately after the fall of Badajos, leaving Mortier to besiege Campo Mayor. His arrival at Seville, and the fame of his successes, restored tranquillity in that province, and confidence amongst the troops. Both had been so grievously shaken by the battle of Barosa, that the works of Arcos, Lucar, Medina, and Alcalade Gazules, intended to defend the rear of the first corps, had been stopped, and the utmost despondency prevailed.* However, discontent and gloom also prevailed in Cadiz.† The government had for some days pretended to make a fresh effort against Victor, but as the fall of Badajos menaced the city with famine, Zayas was finally detached with six thousand infantry and four hundred cavalry to Huelva. His object was to gather provisions in the Conda de Neibla, where Ballesteros had, on the 10th of March, surprised and dispersed Remond's detachment. The French were however soon reinforced, Zayas was checked by D'Aremberg, and, as many of his men deserted to Ballesteros, he withdrew the rest. Blake then assumed the command, Ballesteros and Copons were placed under his orders, and the

* Intercepted Letter from Chief of Engineers, Garbe, March 25th
† Official Abstract of Military Reports, from Cadiz, 1811, MS.

united corps, amounting to eleven thousand infantry and twelve hundred cavalry, were called the *fourth army*. Meanwhile Mendizabel, rallying the fugitives from the battle of the Gebora, at Villa Viciosa, reorganized a weak corps, called the *fifth army*. During these proceedings, Mortier had occupied Albuquerque and Valencia d'Alcantara, and carried on the siege of Campo Mayor. This fortress being commanded at four hundred yards distance by a hill on which there was an abandoned horn-work, would have fallen at once but for the courage and talents of Major Tallaia, a Portuguese engineer. With only two hundred men and five mounted guns, he made such skilful dispositions that the French opened regular trenches, battered the wall in breach with six guns, bombarded the palace with eleven mortars, and pushed a sap to the crest of the glacis. At the end of five days a breach was made, but Tallaia, although ill-seconded by the garrison, repulsed one partial assault, and, being summoned for the second time, demanded and obtained twenty-four hours to wait for succor. None arrived, and this brave man surrendered the 21st of March. Mortier then returned to the Guadiana, leaving Latour Maubourg to dismantle the works and remove the artillery and stores to Badajos.

Such was the posture of affairs when Beresford, who had quitted the northern army after the combat of Foz d'Aronce, arrived at Portalegre with twenty thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and eighteen guns. His instructions were to relieve Campo Mayor, and to besiege Olivenza and Badajos. The first had already surrendered, but the Marshal, being within two marches of it, judged that he might surprise the besieging corps, and, with this view, put his troops in motion.

COMBAT OF CAMPO MAYOR.

In the morning of the 25th, the advanced guard of cavalry, supported at some distance by a detachment of infantry under Colonel Colborne, came suddenly upon Campo Mayor. Latour Maubourg was marching out in confusion, with nearly nine hundred cavalry, three battalions of infantry, some horse artillery, and the battering train of six guns. The English cavalry under General Long immediately turned the town by the left, and the French retreated by the Badajos road. The allies, following along some gentle slopes, then formed a half circle round their enemy, who was now on a fine plain, and Colonel Colborne, although still at a considerable distance, was coming up at a running pace, followed by the rest of the second division. In this state of affairs, the French infantry halted in square, with their cavalry both before and behind them. General Long, who had brought up the thirteenth dragoons, and

some Portuguese squadrons, the heavy cavalry being in reserve, then ordered the former to attack.

Colonel Head immediately led the thirteenth forward, the French hussars as readily rode out from their infantry, and with loose reins the two bodies came fiercely together. Many men were dismounted by the shock, but the combatants pierced clear through on both sides, then re-formed and again charged in the same fearful manner! The fight now became desperate, until Head's troopers, riding closely together, overthrew horse and man, and finally forced the enemy to fly. The French square fired upon the victorious squadrons, but the latter, without flinching, galloped past the long line of the convoy, hewed down the gunners, and being joined by the Portuguese, the hussars still fighting here and there in small bodies, continued the pursuit. They thought with reason that the heavy dragoons, the artillery, and the infantry, some of which were close up, would be sufficient to dispose of whatever part of the enemy's force was thus passed. But Marshal Beresford would not suffer the heavy dragoons to charge; he would not suffer more than two guns to be brought up when he might have had six; he would not suffer those two guns to fire more than a few rounds; and the French marching steadily onward, recovered their battering train, and effected their retreat in safety! Meanwhile the thirteenth and the Portuguese, having pushed on even to the bridge of Badajos, were repulsed by the two guns of that fortress, and being followed by Mortier in person, and met by the retiring square, and by all of the beaten cavalry who could find refuge with it, lost some prisoners. Of the allies one hundred men were killed or hurt, and about seventy taken. Of the enemy about three hundred suffered, one howitzer was captured, and the French Colonel Chamorin was slain in single combat by a trooper of the thirteenth.

To profit from sudden opportunities, a general must be constantly with his advanced guard in an offensive movement. When this combat commenced Beresford was with the main body, and Baron Trip, a staff-officer, deceived by appearances, informed him that the thirteenth had been cut off. Hence the Marshal, anxious to save his cavalry, which he knew could not be reinforced, would not follow up his first blow, observing that the loss of one regiment was enough. But the regiment was not lost, the country was open and plain, the enemy's force and the exact posture of affairs easy to be discerned; and although the thirteenth were severely reprimanded, for having pursued so eagerly without orders, the unsparing admiration of the whole army consoled them.

Campo Mayor was thus recovered so suddenly, that the French left eight thousand rations of bread in the magazines: and they

also evacuated Albuquerque and Valencia d'Alcantara, being infinitely dismayed by the appearance of so powerful an army in the south; indeed, so secretly and promptly had Lord Wellington assembled it, that its existence was only known to the enemy by the blow at Campo Mayor. But, to profit from such able dispositions, it was necessary to be as rapid in execution, giving the enemy no time to recover from his first surprise; and this was the more essential, because the breach of Badajos was not closed, nor the trenches obliterated, nor the exausted magazines and stores replenished. Soult had carried away six battalions and a regiment of cavalry, four hundred men had been thrown into Olivenza, three thousand into Badajos; and thus, including the losses sustained during the operations, Mortier's numbers were reduced to less than ten thousand men. He could therefore not have maintained the line of the Guadiana and collected provisions also. Beresford should have instantly marched upon Merida, driven back the fifth corps, and opened a fresh communication by Jerumenha with Elvas; the fall of Badajos would then have been inevitable. The confusion occasioned by the sudden appearance of the army at Campo Mayor, and the moral impression produced by the charge of the thirteenth dragoons, guaranteed the success of this march; the English General might even have passed the river at Merida before Mortier could have ascertained his object.

Beresford, neglecting this happy opportunity, put his troops into quarters round Elvas, induced thereto by the fatigue and wants of the soldiers, especially those of the fourth division, who had been marching incessantly since the 6th of the month, and were barefooted and exhausted.

He had been instructed by Lord Wellington to throw a bridge over the Guadiana at Jerumenha, to push back the fifth corps, and to invest Olivenza and Badajos. The Portuguese government were to have provided some of the means for these operations, and a report had been made to the effect that all things necessary, that is to say, that provisions, shoes, battering-guns, ammunition, and transport were actually collected; that the Guadiana abounded in serviceable craft; that twenty large boats, formerly belonging to Cuesta, which had been brought away from Badajos before the siege, were at Elvas; and that all other necessaries would be sent from Lisbon. It now appeared that no magazines of provisions or stores were prepared; that very little transport was provided; that only five of Cuesta's boats had been brought from Badajos; that there were no serviceable craft on the river, and that some small pontoons, sent from Lisbon, were unfit to bear the force of the current, or to sustain the passage of guns. The country also was so

deficient in provisions, that the garrison stores of Elvas were taken to feed the army.

All these circumstances combined to point out Merida as the true line of operations; moreover, plenty of food was to be had on the left bank of the Guadiana, and the measures necessary to remedy the evil state of affairs on the right bank, did not require the presence of an army to protect them. The great distress of the fourth division for shoes, alone offered any serious obstacle; but, under the circumstances, it would not have been too much to expect a momentary effort from such an excellent division, and it might without danger even have been left behind.

Marshal Beresford preferred halting until he could procure the means of passing at Jerumenha, an error that may be considered as the principal cause of those long and bloody operations which afterwards detained Lord Wellington more than a year on the frontiers of Portugal. For, during Beresford's delay, General Phillipon, one of the ablest governors that ever defended a fortress, levelled the trenches, restored the glacis, and stopped the breach; and Latour Maubourg, who had succeeded Mortier in command of the troops, covered the country with foraging parties, and filled the magazines.

Captain Squire, of the engineers, undertook to bridge the Guadiana under Jerumenha. He fixed trestle piers on each side in the shallows, and connected them with the five Spanish boats, and a squadron of cavalry was secretly passed over, by a ford, to protect the workmen from surprise. The 3d of April, the bridge was finished, and the troops assembled during the night in the woods near Jerumenha, intending to cross at daylight, but the river suddenly swelling, swept away the trestles, rendered the ford impassable, and stopped the operations. No more materials could be immediately procured; the Spanish boats were therefore converted into flying bridges for the cavalry and artillery, and Squire constructed a slight narrow bridge for infantry, with the pontoons and with casks taken from the neighboring villages. To cover this operation a battalion was added to the squadron already on the left bank, and the army commenced passing the 5th of April; but it was late in the night of the 6th ere the whole had crossed and taken up their position, which was on a strong range of hills, covered by a swampy rivulet.

During this time, Latour Maubourg was so entirely occupied in securing and provisioning Badajos, that his foragers were extended fifty miles to the rear, and he took no notice whatever of Beresford's proceedings. This error savored rather of the Spanish than of the French method of making war; for it is evident that a movable column of five thousand infantry, with guns and cavalry, could, not-

withstanding the guns of Jerumenha, have easily cut off the small detachment of the British on the left bank, and thus have completely frustrated the operations. The allied troops, being so numerous, should have been carried over in the boats, and intrenched on the other side in sufficient force to resist any attack before the construction of the bridge was attempted. It is not easy to say which general acted with the most imprudence—Latour Maubourg in neglecting, or Beresford in unnecessarily tempting fortune.

When the British were in possession of the left bank, the French General awaking, collected three thousand infantry, five hundred cavalry, and four guns at Olivenza, whence he marched, at daylight on the 7th, to oppose a passage which had been completed the day before. He however surprised a squadron of the thirteenth, which was in front, and then came so close up to the main body as to exchange shots; yet he was permitted to retire unmolested, in the face of more than twenty thousand men!

During these proceedings, the fifth Spanish army re-occupied Valencia d'Alcantara and Albuquerque, and pushed cavalry posts to La Rocca and Montijo, Ballesteros entered Fregenal, and Castaños, who was appointed to command in Gallicia as well as Estremadura, arrived at Elvas. This General was in friendly intercourse with Beresford, but had a grudge against Blake. At first he pretended to the chief authority, as the elder Captain-General; Blake demanded a like power over Beresford, who was not disposed to admit the claim. Now Castaños, having little liking for a command under such difficult circumstances, and being desirous to thwart Blake, and fearful lest Beresford should, under these circumstances, refuse to pass the Guadiana, arranged that he who brought the greatest force in the field should be generalissimo. Thus the inferior officer commanded in chief.

To cover his bridges, which he reconstructed in a more substantial manner, Beresford directed extensive intrenchments to be executed by the militia from Elvas, and then leaving a strong detachment for their protection, advanced with the remainder of the army. Latour Maubourg retired upon Albuera, and the allies, who had been joined by Madden's cavalry, summoned Olivenza on the 9th. Beresford apparently expected no defence; for it was not until after the governor had rejected the summons that he sent Major Dickson to Elvas to prepare a battery train for the siege. Meanwhile the army encamped round the place, the communication with Ballesteros was opened, and Castaños advancing with the fifth army to Merida, pushed his cavalry to Almendralejos. The French then fell back to Llerena, and Beresford, leaving General Cole with the fourth division and Madden's cavalry to besiege Olivenza,

took post himself at Albuera on the 11th. In this position he communicated by his left with Castaños, and by spreading his horsemen in front cut off all communication with Badajos. The army now lived on the resources of the country, and a brigade was sent to Talavera Real to collect supplies.

The 14th, six twenty-four pounders reached Olivenza, and, being placed in a battery constructed on an abandoned horn-work formerly noticed, played with such success, that the breach became practicable before the morning of the 15th. Some riflemen posted in the vineyards kept down the fire of the place, and the garrison, consisting of three hundred and eighty men, with fifteen guns, surrendered at discretion.

Cole was immediately directed upon Zafra by the road of Almendral. Beresford, who had recalled the brigade from Talavera, was already in motion for the same place by the royal causeway. His object was to drive Latour Maubourg over the Morena, and cut off General Maransin. The latter General, who had been in pursuit of Ballesteros ever since the retreat of Zayas, and had defeated him at Fregenal on the 12th, was following up his victory towards Salvatierra. The allies were therefore close upon him, but an alcalde gave him notice of their approach, and he retreated in safety. Meanwhile two French regiments of cavalry, advancing from Llerena to collect contributions, reached Los Santos, between which place and Usagre they were charged by the thirteenth dragoons, and followed for six miles so vigorously that one hundred and fifty were killed or taken, without the loss of a man on the part of the pursuers.

On the 16th General Cole arrived from Olivenza, and the whole army being thus concentrated about Zafra, Latour Maubourg retired on the 18th to Guadalcanal; the Spanish cavalry then occupied Llerena, and the resources of Estremadura were wholly at the service of the allies. During these operations, General Charles Alten, coming from Lisbon with a brigade of German light infantry, reached Olivenza, and Lord Wellington also arrived at Elvas, where Beresford, after drawing his infantry nearer to Badajos, went to meet him. The presence of the General-in-Chief was very agreeable to the troops; they had seen with surprise great masses put in motion without any adequate results, and thought the operations had been slow, without being prudent. The whole army was over the Guadiana on the 7th, and, including the Spaniards from Montijo, Beresford commanded at least twenty-five thousand men, whereas Latour Maubourg never had more than ten thousand, many of whom were dispersed foraging, far and wide; yet the French General, without displaying much skill, had maintained

himself in Estremadura for ten days; and during this time, no corps being employed to constrain the garrison of Badajos, the governor continued to bring in timber and other materials for the defence, at his pleasure.

Lord Wellington arrived the 21st. The 22d he forded the Guadiana, just below the mouth of the Caya, with Madden's cavalry and Alten's Germans, and pushed close up to Badajos. A convoy, escorted by some infantry and cavalry, was coming in from the country, and an effort was made to cut it off; but the governor sallied, the allies lost a hundred men, and the convoy reached the town.

Lord Wellington now considering that Soult would certainly endeavor to disturb the siege with a considerable force, demanded the assent of the Spanish generals to the following plan of combined operations, before he would commence the investment of the place. 1. That Blake, marching up from Ayamonte, should take post at Xeres de los Cavalleros. 2. That Ballesteros should occupy Barquillo on his left. 3. That the cavalry of the fifth army, stationed at Llerena, should observe the road of Guadalcanal, and communicate through Zafra, by the right, with Ballesteros. These dispositions were to watch the passes of the Morena. 4. That Castaños should furnish three battalions for the siege, and keep the rest of his corps at Merida, to support the Spanish cavalry. 5. That the British army should be in second line, and, in the event of a battle, Albuera, centrically situated with respect to the roads leading from Andalusia to Badajos, should be the point of concentration for all the allied forces.

The whole of the train and stores, for the attack on Badajos, being taken from the ramparts and magazines of Elvas, the utmost prudence was required to secure the safety of the guns, lest that fortress, half dismantled, should be exposed to a siege. Wherefore as the Guadiana, by rising ten feet, had again carried away the bridges at Jerumenha, on the 24th Lord Wellington directed the line of communication with Portugal to be established by Merida, until more settled weather should admit of fresh arrangements. Howbeit, political difficulties intervening obliged him to delay the siege. The troops under Mendizabel had committed many excesses in Portugal; the disputes between them and the inhabitants were pushed so far, that the Spanish General had pillaged the town of Fernando, and the Portuguese government, in reprisal, meant to seize Olivenza, which had formerly belonged to them. The Spanish Regency indeed publicly disavowed Mendizabel's conduct, and Mr. Stuart's strenuous representations deterred the Portuguese from plunging the two countries into war; but this affair, joined to

the natural slowness and arrogance of the Spaniards, prevented both Castaños and Blake from giving an immediate assent to the English General's plans. Meanwhile, intelligence reached the latter that Massena was in force on the Agueda; wherefore, reluctantly directing Beresford to postpone the siege until the Spanish generals should give in their assent, or until the fall of Almeida should enable a British reinforcement to arrive, he ordered the militia of the northern provinces again to take the field, and repaired with the utmost speed to the Coa.*

OPERATIONS IN THE NORTH.

During his absence, the blockade of Almeida had been closely pressed, while the army was so disposed as to cut off all communication. The allied forces were, however, distressed for provisions, and great part of their corn came from the side of Ledesma, being smuggled by the peasants through the French posts, and passed over the Agueda by ropes, which were easily hidden amongst the deep chasms of that river, near its confluence with the Douro.

Massena was intent upon relieving the place. His retreat upon Salamanca had been to restore the organization and equipments of his army, which he could not do upon Ciudad Rodrigo, without consuming the stores of that fortress. His cantonments extended from San Felices by Ledesma to Toro, his cavalry was in bad condition, and his artillery nearly unhorsed. But from Bessières he expected, with reason, aid both of men and provisions, and in that expectation was prepared to renew the campaign immediately. Discord, that bane of military operations, interfered. Bessières had neglected and continued to neglect the army of Portugal. Symptoms of hostilities with Russia were so apparent, even at this period, that he looked rather to that quarter than to what was passing before him, and his opinion that a war in the north was inevitable was so openly expressed as to reach the English army. Meanwhile, Massena vainly demanded the aid which was necessary to save the only acquisition of his campaign. A convoy of provisions had, however, entered Ciudad Rodrigo on the 13th of April, and on the 16th a reinforcement and a second convoy also succeeded in gaining that fortress, although General Spencer crossed the Agueda, with eight thousand men, to intercept them; a rear-guard of two hundred men was indeed overtaken, and surrounded by the cavalry in an open plain, but it was not prevented from reaching the place.

Towards the end of the month, the new organization decreed by Napoleon, was put in execution. Two divisions of the ninth corps joined Massena; and Drouet was preparing to march with the remaining eleven thousand infantry and cavalry, to reinforce and

* Appendix 16, § 10, Vol. II.

take the command of the fifth corps, when Massena, having collected all his own detachments, and received a promise of assistance from Bessières, prevailed upon him to defer his march until an effort had been made to relieve Almeida. With this view the French army was put in motion towards the frontier of Portugal. The light division immediately resumed its former positions, the left at Gallegos and Marialva, the right at Espeja; the cavalry were dispersed, partly towards the sources of the Azava, and partly behind Gallegos. While in this situation, Colonel O'Meara and eighty men of the Irish brigade were taken by Julian Sanchez, the affair having been, it was said, preconcerted, to enable the former to quit the French service.

On the 23d, two thousand French infantry and a squadron of cavalry, marching out of Ciudad Rodrigo, made a sudden effort to seize the bridge of Marialva, but the passage was bravely maintained by Captain Dobbs with one company of the fifty-second and some riflemen. On the 25th, Massena reached Ciudad Rodrigo, and the 27th, his advanced guard felt all the line of the division from Espeja to Marialva. Lord Wellington arrived on the 28th, and immediately concentrated the main body of the allies behind the Dos Casas river. The Azava being swollen and difficult to ford, the enemy continued to feel the line of the outposts until the 2d of May, when, the waters having subsided, the whole French army was observed coming out of Ciudad Rodrigo. The light division, after a slight skirmish of horse at Gallegos, then commenced a retrogade movement from that place and from Espeja upon Fuentes Onoro. The country immediately in rear of those villages was wooded as far as the Dos Casas, but an open plain between the two lines of march offered the enemy's powerful cavalry an opportunity of cutting off the retreat. The French appeared regardless of this advantage, and the division remained in the woods bordering the right and left of the plain until the middle of the night, when the march was renewed, and the Dos Casas was crossed at Fuentes Onoro.

This beautiful village had escaped all injury during the previous warfare, although occupied alternately for above a year by both sides. Every family in it was well known to the light division, and it was therefore a subject of deep regret to find that the preceding troops had pillaged it, leaving only the shells of houses where, three days before, a friendly population had been living in comfort. This wanton act was so warmly felt by the whole army, that eight thousand dollars were afterwards collected by general subscription for the poor inhabitants, but the injury sunk deeper than the atonement.

Lord Wellington had determined not to risk much to maintain his blockade, and he was well aware that Massena, reinforced by the army of the north and by the ninth corps, could bring down superior numbers; for so culpably negligent had the Portuguese government been, that their troops were actually starving. The infantry had quitted their colors, or had fallen sick from extenuation by thousands, the cavalry were rendered useless, and it was even feared that the whole would disband. Nevertheless, when the moment of trial arrived, the English General, trusting to the valor of his soldiers, and the ascendency over the enemy which they had acquired during the pursuit from Santarem, would not retreat, although his army, reduced to thirty-two thousand infantry, twelve hundred cavalry in bad condition, and forty-two guns, was unable, seeing the superiority of the French horse, to oppose the enemy's march in the plain.

The allies occupied a fine table-land lying between the Turones and the Dos Casas. The left was at Fort Conception, the centre opposite to the village of Alameda, the right at Fuentes Onoro, the whole distance being five miles. The Dos Casas, flowing in a deep ravine, protected the front of this line, and the French General could not, with any prudence, venture to march by his own right against Almeida, lest the allies, crossing the ravine at the villages of Alameda and Fuentes Onoro, should fall on his flank and drive him into the Agueda. Hence, to cover the blockade, which was maintained by Pack's brigade and an English regiment, it was sufficient to leave the fifth division near Fort Conception, and the sixth division opposite Alameda. The first and third were then concentrated on a gentle rise, about a cannon shot behind Fuentes Onoro, where the steppe of land which the army occupied turned back and ended on the Turones, becoming rocky and difficult as it approached that river.

FIRST COMBAT OF FUENTES ONORO.

The French came up in three columns abreast. The cavalry, the sixth corps, and Drouet's division appeared at Fuentes Onoro, but the eighth and second corps, moving against Alameda and Fort Conception, seemed to menace the left of the position, wherefore the light division, after passing the Dos Casas, reinforced the sixth division. General Loison, however, without waiting for Massena's orders, fell upon Fuentes Onoro, which was occupied by five battalions of chosen troops, detached from the first and third divisions.

Most of the houses in this village were quite in the bottom of

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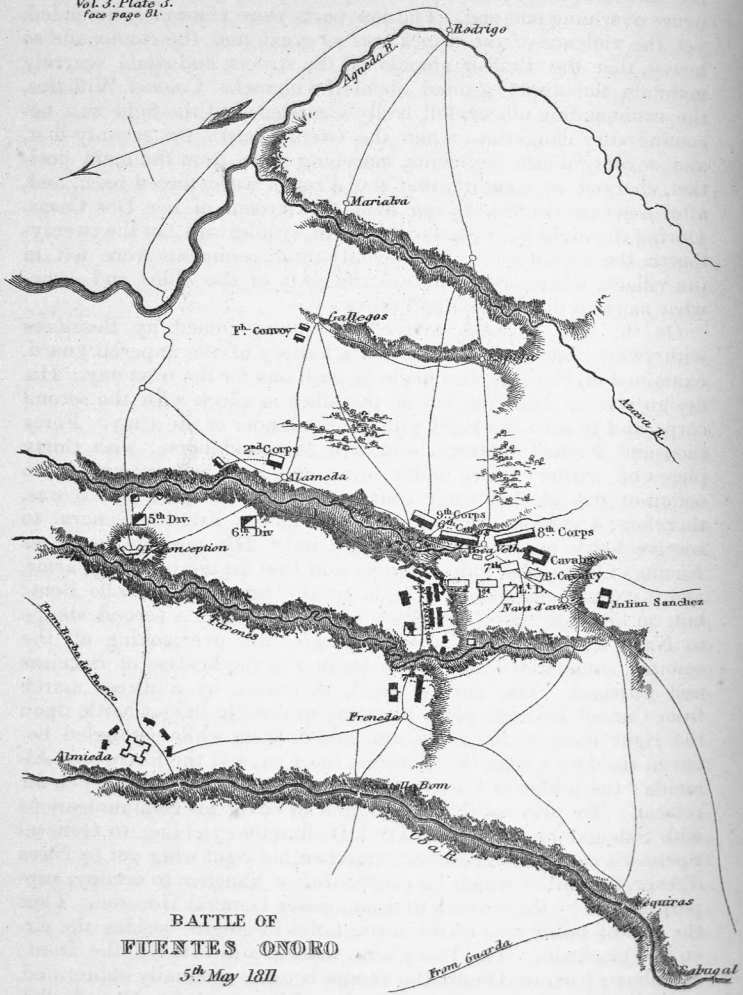
face page 81.



BATTLE OF
FUENTES ONORO
5th May 1811

the ravine, and an old chapel and some buildings on a craggy eminence overhung one end. The low parts were vigorously defended, yet the violence of the attack was so great, and the cannonade so heavy, that the British abandoned the streets, and could scarcely maintain the upper ground about the chapel. Colonel Williams, the commanding officer, fell badly wounded, and the fight was becoming very dangerous, when the twenty-fourth, the seventy-first, and seventy-ninth regiments, marching down from the main position, charged so roughly, that the French were forced back, and, after a severe contest, driven over the stream of the Dos Casas. During the night the detachments were withdrawn; but the twenty-fourth, the seventy-first, and seventy-ninth regiments were left in the village, where two hundred and sixty of the allies and somewhat more of the French had fallen.

On the 4th, Massena arrived, and being joined by Bessières with twelve hundred cavalry and a battery of the imperial guard, examined all the line, and made dispositions for the next day. His design was to hold the left of the allies in check with the second corps, and to turn the right with the remainder of the army. Forty thousand French infantry, and five thousand horse, with thirty pieces of artillery, were under arms, and they had shown in the action of the 3d that their courage was not abated; and it was, therefore, a very audacious resolution in the English General to receive battle on such dangerous ground.* His position, as far as Fuentes Onoro, was indeed strong and free for the use of all arms, and it covered his communication by the bridge of Castello Bom; but, on his right flank, the plain was continued in a second steppe to Nava d'Aver, where a considerable hill, overlooking all the country, commanded the roads leading to the bridges of Seceiras and Sabugal. The enemy could, therefore, by a direct march from Ciudad Rodrigo, place his army at once in line of battle upon the right flank of the allies, and attack them while entangled between the Dos Casas, the Turones, the Coa, and the fortress of Almeida; the bridge of Castello Bom alone would have been open for retreat. To prevent this stroke, and to cover his communications with Sabugal and Seceiras, Lord Wellington, yielding to General Spencer's earnest suggestions, stretched his right wing out to Nava d'Aver, the hill of which he caused Julian Sanchez to occupy, supporting him by the seventh division, under General Houston. Thus the line of battle was above seven miles in length, besides the circuit of blockade. The Dos Casas, indeed, still covered the front; but above Fuentes Onoro, the ravine became gradually obliterated, resolving itself into a swampy wood, which extended to Poço Velho, a village half-way between Fuentes and Nava d'Aver. The left

* Appendix 15, § 2, Vol. II.

wing of the seventh division occupied this wood and the village of Poço Velho, but the right wing was refused.

BATTLE OF FUENTES ONORO.

It was Massena's intention to have made his dispositions in the night, in such a manner as to commence the attack at daybreak on the 5th; but a delay of two hours occurring, the whole of his movements were plainly descried. The eighth corps withdrawn from Alameda, and supported by all the French cavalry, was seen marching above the village of Poço Velho, and at the same time the sixth corps and Drouet's division took ground to their own left, yet still keeping a division in front of Fuentes. At this sight the light division and the English horse hastened to the support of General Houston, while the first and third divisions made a movement parallel to that of the sixth corps. The latter, however, drove the left wing of the seventh division, consisting of Portuguese and British, from the village of Poço Velho, with loss, and was gaining ground in the wood also, when the riflemen of the light division arriving at that point, restored the fight. The French cavalry, then passing Poço Velho, commenced forming in order of battle on the plain, between the wood and the hill of Nava d'Aver. Julian Sanchez immediately retired across the Turones, partly in fear, but more in anger at the death of his lieutenant, who having foolishly ridden close up to the enemy, making many violent gestures, was mistaken for a French officer, and shot by a soldier of the guards, before the action commenced.

Montbrun occupied himself with this weak partida for an hour, but when the guerilla chief had entirely fallen back, he turned the right of the seventh division, and charged the British cavalry, which had moved up to its support. The combat was very unequal, for, by an abuse too common, so many men had been drawn from the ranks as orderlies to general officers, and for other purposes, that not more than a thousand English troopers were in the field. The French therefore, with one shock, drove in all the cavalry outguards, and cutting off Captain Ramsay's battery, came sweeping in upon the reserves of horse and upon the seventh division. But their leading squadrons approaching in a disorderly manner, were partially checked by the British, and at the same time a great commotion was observed in their main body. Men and horses there closed with confusion and tumult towards one point, a thick dust arose, and loud cries, and the sparkling of blades and the flashing of pistols, indicated some extraordinary occurrence. Suddenly the multitude became violently agitated, an English shout pealed high and clear, the mass was rent asunder, and Norman

Ramsay burst forth at the head of his battery, his horses breathing fire, stretched like greyhounds along the plain, the guns bounded behind them like things of no weight, and the mounted gunners followed in close career. Captain Brotherton, of the fourteenth dragoons, seeing this, instantly rode forth with a squadron, and overturned the head of the pursuing troops, and General Charles Stewart, joining in the charge, took the French General Lamotte, fighting hand to hand. The enemy, however, came in strongly, and the British cavalry retired behind the light division, which was immediately thrown into squares, but ere the seventh division, which was more advanced, could do the same, the horsemen were upon them, and some were cut down. Nevertheless, the men stood firm, and the Chasseurs Britanniques, ranging behind a loose stone wall, poured in such a fire that their foes recoiled and seemed bewildered.

But while these brilliant actions were passing at this point, the French were making progress in the wood of Poço Velho, and as the English divisions were separated, and the right wing turned, it was abundantly evident that the battle would soon be lost if the original concentrated position above Fuentes Onoro was not quickly regained. Lord Wellington, therefore, ordered the seventh division to cross the Turones and move down the left bank to Frenada, the light division to retire over the plain, and the cavalry to cover the rear. He also withdrew the first and third divisions, placing them and the Portuguese in line on the steppe before described as running perpendicularly to the ravine of Fuentes Onoro.

General Crawfurd, who had resumed the command of the light division, first covered the passage of the seventh division over the Turones, and then retired slowly over the plain in squares, having the British cavalry principally on his right flank. He was followed by the enemy's horse, which continually outflanked him, and near the wood surprised and sabred an advanced post of the guards, making Colonel Hill and fourteen men prisoners, but then continuing their charge against the forty-second regiment, the French were repulsed. Many times Montbrun made as if he would storm the light division squares, and although the latter were too formidable to be meddled with, there was not, during the war, a more dangerous hour for England. The whole of that vast plain as far as the Turones was covered with a confused multitude, amidst which the squares appeared but as specks, for there was a great concourse, composed of commissariat followers of the camp, servants, baggage, led horses, and peasants attracted by curiosity, and finally, the broken piquets and parties coming out of the woods The seventh division was separated from the army by the Turones,

five thousand French cavalry, with fifteen pieces of artillery, were close at hand, impatient to charge, the infantry of the eighth corps was in order of battle behind the horsemen, and the wood was filled with the skirmishers of the sixth corps. If the latter body, pivoting upon Fuentes, had issued forth, while Drouet's divisions fell on that village; if the eighth corps had attacked the light division, while the whole of the cavalry made a general charge, the loose multitude encumbering the plain would have been driven violently in upon the first division, in such a manner as to have intercepted the latter's fire and broken its ranks.

No such effort was made. Montbrun's horsemen merely hovered about Crawfurd's squares, the plain was soon cleared, the cavalry took post behind the centre, and the light division formed a reserve to the right of the first division, sending the riflemen amongst the rocks to connect it with the seventh division, which had arrived at Frenada, and was there joined by Julian Sanchez.

At sight of this new front, so deeply lined with troops, the French stopped short, and commenced a heavy cannonade, which did great execution from the closeness of the allied masses; but twelve British guns replied with vigor, and the violence of the enemy's fire abated. Their cavalry then drew out of range, and a body of infantry, attempting to glide down the ravine of the Turones, was repulsed by the riflemen and the light companies of the guards.

All this time a fierce battle was going on at Fuentes Onoro. Massena had directed Drouet to carry this village at the very moment when Montbrun's cavalry should turn the right wing; it was however two hours later ere the attack commenced. The three British regiments made a desperate resistance, but overmatched in number, and little accustomed to the desultory fighting of light troops, were pierced and divided. Two companies of the seventy-ninth were taken, Colonel Cameron was mortally wounded, and the lower part of the town was carried; the upper part was, however, stiffly held, and the rolling of the musketry was incessant.

Had the attack been earlier, and the whole of Drouet's division thrown frankly into the fight, while the sixth corps moving through the wood closely turned the village, the passage must have been forced and the left of the new position outflanked; but now, Lord Wellington having all his reserves in hand, detached considerable masses to the support of the regiments in Fuentes. The French continued also to reinforce their troops, the whole of the sixth corps and a part of Drouet's division were finally engaged, and several turns of fortune occurred. At one time the fighting was on the banks of the stream and amongst the lower houses; at another upon the rugged heights and round the chapel, and some of the

enemy's skirmishers even penetrated completely through towards the main position; but the village was never entirely abandoned by the defenders, and in a charge of the seventy-first, seventy-ninth, and eighty-eighth regiments, led by Colonel M'Kinnon against a heavy mass which had gained the chapel eminence, a great number of the French fell. In this manner the fight lasted until evening, when the lower part of the town was abandoned by both parties. The British maintained the chapel and crags, the French retired a cannon shot from the stream.

After the action a brigade of the light division relieved the regiments in the village, a slight demonstration by the second corps near Fort Conception was checked by a battalion of the Lusitanian legion, and both armies remained in observation. Fifteen hundred men and officers, of which three hundred were prisoners, constituted the loss of the allies. That of the enemy was estimated at the time to be near five thousand, but this exaggerated calculation was founded upon the erroneous supposition that four hundred dead were lying about Fuentes Onoro. All armies make rash estimates on such occasions. Having had charge to bury the carcasses at that point, I can affirm that, immediately about the village, not more than one hundred and thirty bodies were to be found, one-third of which were British.

During the battle, the French convoy for the supply of Almeida was kept at Gallegos, in readiness to move, and Lord Wellington now sent Julian Sanchez from Frenada, to menace it, and to disturb the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo. This produced no effect, and a more decisive battle being expected on the 6th, the light division made breast-works amongst the crags of Fuentes Onoro. Lord Wellington also intrenched that part of the position which was immediately behind this village, so that the carrying of it would have scarcely benefited the enemy. Fuentes Onoro, strictly speaking, was not tenable. There was a wooded tongue of land on the British right, that overlooked, at half-cannon shot, all the upper as well as the lower part of the village both in flank and rear, yet was too distant from the position to be occupied by the allies; had Ney been at the head of the sixth corps, he would have quickly crowned this ridge, and then Fuentes could only have been maintained by submitting to a butchery.

On the 6th, the enemy sent his wounded to the rear, making no demonstration of attack, and as the 7th passed in a like inaction, the British intrenchments were perfected. The 8th, Massena withdrew his main body to the woods leading upon Espeja and Gallegos, but still maintained posts at Alameda and Fuentes. On the 10th, without being in any manner molested, he retired across the

Agueda, the sixth and eighth corps, and the cavalry, passing at Ciudad Rodrigo, the second corps at the bridge of Barba del Puerco. Bessières then carried off the imperial guards, Massena was recalled to France, and Marmont assumed the command of the army of Portugal.

Both sides claimed the victory. The French, because they won the passage at Poço Velho, cleared the wood, turned our right flank, obliged the cavalry to retire, and forced Lord Wellington to relinquish three miles of ground, and to change his front. The English, because the village of Fuentes, so often attacked, was successfully defended, and because the principal object (the covering the blockade of Almeida) was attained.

Certain it is, that Massena at first gained great advantages. Napoleon would have made them fatal! but it is also certain that, with an overwhelming cavalry, on ground particularly suitable to that arm, the Prince of Esling having, as it were, indicated all the errors of the English General's position, stopped short at the very moment when he should have sprung forward. By some this has been attributed to extreme negligence, by others to disgust at being superseded by Marmont, but the true reason seems to be, that discord in his army had arisen to actual insubordination. The imperial guards would not charge at his order—Junot did not second him cordially—Loison disregarded his instructions—Drouet sought to spare his own divisions in the fight, and Reynier remained perfeetly inactive. Thus the machinery of battle was shaken, and would not work.

General Pelet censures Lord Wellington for not sending his cavalry against Reynier after the second position was taken up. He asserts that any danger, on that side, would have forced the French to retreat. This criticism is, however, unsustainable, being based on the notion that the allies had fifty thousand men in the field, whereas, including Sanchez' partida, they had not thirty-five thousand.* It may be, with more justice, objected to Massena that he did not launch some of his numerous horsemen, by the bridge of Seceiras, or Sabugal, against Guarda and Celerico, to destroy the magazines, cut the communication, and capture the mules and other means of transport belonging to the allied army. The vice of the English General's position would then have been clearly exposed, for, although the second regiment of German hussars was on the march from Lisbon, it had not passed Coimbra at this period, and could not have protected the dépôts. But it can never be too often repeated that war, however adorned by splendid strokes of skill, is commonly a series of errors and accidents. All the operations, on both sides, for six weeks, furnished illustrations of this truth.

* Appendix 15, § 8, Vol. II.

Ney's opposition had prevented Massena's march upon Coria, which would have secured Badajos and Campo Mayor, and probably added Elvas to them. Latour Maubourg's tardiness had like to have cost Mortier a rear-guard and a battering-train. Beresford's blunder at Campo Mayor, and his refusing of the line of Merida, enabled the French to secure Badajos. At Sabugal, the petulance of a staff-officer marred an admirable combination, and produced a dangerous combat. Drouet's negligence placed Almeida at the mercy of the allies, and a mistaken notion of Massena's sufferings during the retreat, induced Lord Wellington to undertake two great operations at the same time, which were above his strength. In the battle of Fuentes Onoro, more errors than skill were observable on both sides, and the train of accidents did not stop there. The prize contended for was still to present another example of the uncertainty of war.*

EVACUATION OF ALMEIDA.

General Brennier, made prisoner at Vimiero, but afterwards exchanged, was governor of this fortress. During the battle of Fuentes Onoro, his garrison, consisting of fifteen hundred men, skirmished boldly with the blockading force, and loud explosions, supposed to be signals of communication with the relieving army, were frequent in the place. When all hopes of succor had vanished, a soldier named Tillet contrived, with extraordinary courage and presence of mind, to penetrate, although in uniform, through the posts of blockade. He carried an order for Brennier to evacuate the fortress.

Meanwhile Massena, by crossing the Agueda, abandoned Almeida to its fate, and the British General placed the light division in its old position on the Azava with cavalry-posts on the lower Agueda. He also desired Sir William Erskine to send the fourth regiment to Barba del Puerco, and he directed General Alexander Campbell to continue the blockade with the sixth division and with General Pack's brigade. But Campbell's dispositions were either negligently made, or negligently executed, and Erskine never transmitted the orders to the fourth regiment, and it was under these circumstances that Brennier, undismayed by the retreat of the French army, resolved, like Julian Estrada, at Hostalrich, to force his way through the blockading troops. An open country and a double line of posts greatly enhanced the difficulty, yet Brennier was resolute not only to cut his own passage but to render the fortress useless to the allies. To effect this, he ruined all the principal bastions, and kept up a constant fire of his artillery in a singular manner; for always he fired several guns at one moment with

* Napoleon's Official Correspondence with Bessières.

very heavy charges, placing one across the muzzle of another, so that, while some shots flew towards the besiegers and a loud explosion was heard, others destroyed pieces without attracting notice.

At midnight of the 10th, all being ready, he sprung his mines, sallied forth in a compact column, broke through the piquets, and passed between the quarters of the reserves, with a nicety that proved at once his talent of observation and his coolness. General Pack following, with a few men collected on the instant, plied him with a constant fire, yet nothing could shake or retard his column, which in silence, and without returning a shot, gained the rough country leading upon Barba del Puerco. Here it halted for a moment, just as daylight broke, and Pack, who was at hand, hearing that some English dragoons were in a village a short distance to the right, sent an officer to bring them out upon the French flank, thus occasioning a slight skirmish and consequently delay. The troops of blockade had paid little attention at first to the explosion of the mines, thinking them a repetition of Brennier's previous practice, but Pack's fire having roused them, the thirty-sixth regiment was now close at hand, and the fourth also, having heard the firing at Valde Mula, was rapidly gaining the right flank of the enemy. Brennier, having driven off the cavalry, was again in march, but the British regiments, throwing off their knapsacks, followed at such a pace, that they overtook the rear of his column in the act of descending the deep chasm of Barba del Puerco. Many were killed and wounded, and three hundred were taken; but the pursuers having rashly passed the bridge in pursuit, the second corps, which was in order of battle, awaiting Brennier's approach, repulsed them with a loss of thirty or forty men. Had Sir William Erskine given the fourth regiment its orders, the French column would have been lost.

Lord Wellington, stung by this event, and irritated by several previous examples of undisciplined valor, issued a remonstrance to the army. It was strong, and the following remarks are as applicable to some writers as to soldiers:—"*The officers of the army may depend upon it that the enemy to whom they are opposed is not less prudent than powerful. Notwithstanding what has been printed in gazettes and newspapers, we have never seen small bodies, unsupported, successfully opposed to large; nor has the experience of any officer realized the stories which all have read of whole armies being driven by a handful of light infantry and dragoons.*"

CHAPTER VI.

Lord Wellington quits the army of Beira—Marshal Beresford's operations—Colonel Colborne beats up the French quarters in Estremadura, and intercepts their convoys—First English siege of Badajos—Captain Squire breaks ground before San Christoval—His works overwhelmed by the French fire—Soult advances to relieve the place—Beresford raises the siege—Holds a conference with the Spanish Generals, and resolves to fight—Colonel Colborne rejoins the army, which takes a position at Albuera—Allied cavalry driven in by the French—General Blake joins Beresford—General Cole arrives on the frontier—Battle of Albuera.

When Marmont had thus recovered the garrison of Almeida, he withdrew the greatest part of his army towards Salamanca. Lord Wellington then leaving the first, fifth, sixth, and light divisions on the Azava, under General Spencer, directed the third and seventh divisions and the second German hussars upon Badajos. On the 15th, hearing that Soult, although hitherto reported by Beresford to be entirely on the defensive, was actually marching into Estremadura, he set out himself for that province; but ere he could arrive, a great and bloody battle had terminated the operations.

While awaiting the Spanish generals' accession to Lord Wellington's plan, Beresford had fixed his head-quarters at Almendralejos; but Latour Maubourg remained at Guadalcanal, whence his parties foraged the most fertile tracts between the armies. Penne Villamur was therefore reinforced with five squadrons, and Colonel John Colborne was detached with a brigade of the second division, two Spanish guns, and two squadrons of cavalry, to curb the French inroads, and to raise the confidence of the people. Colborne, a man of singular talent for war, by rapid marches and sudden changes of direction, in concert with Villamur, created great confusion amongst the enemy's parties. He intercepted several convoys, and obliged the French troops to quit Fuente Ovejuna, La Granja, Azuaga, and most of the other frontier towns; and he imposed upon Latour Maubourg with so much address, that the latter, imagining a great force was at hand, abandoned Guadalcanal also and fell back to Constantino.

Having cleared the country on that side, Colborne attempted to surprise the fortified post of Benelcazar, and, by a hardy attempt, was like to have carried it. Riding on to the drawbridge with a few officers in the gray of the morning, he summoned the commandant to surrender, as the only means of saving himself from the Spanish army which was close at hand and would give no quar-

ter. The French officer, although amazed at the appearance of the party, was however too resolute to yield, and Colborne, quick to perceive the attempt had failed, galloped off under a few straggling shot. After this, taking to the mountains, he rejoined the army without any loss. During his absence, the Spanish generals had acceded to Lord Wellington's proposition; Blake was in march for Xeres Caballeros, and Ballesteros was at Burgillos. The waters of the Guadiana had also subsided, the bridge under Jerumenha was restored, and the preparations completed for the

FIRST ENGLISH SIEGE OF BADAJOS.

The 5th of May, General William Stewart invested the place, on the left bank of the Guadiana, with two squadrons of horse, six field-pieces, and three brigades of infantry, and the formation of the dépôt of the siege was commenced by the engineers and artillery.

On the 7th, the remainder of the infantry, reinforced by two thousand Spaniards under Carlos d'España, encamped in the woods near the fortress; Madden's Portuguese remained in observation near Merida, and a troop of horse-artillery arriving from Lisbon was attached to the English cavalry, which was still near Los Santos and Zafra. The flying bridge was at first brought up from Jerumenha, and re-established near the mouth of the Caya, but was again drawn over, because the right bank of the Guadiana being still open, some French horse had come down the river.

The 8th, General Lumley invested Christoval on the right bank, with a brigade of the second division, four light Spanish guns, the seventeenth Portuguese infantry, and two squadrons of horse drafted from the garrison of Elvas. These troops did not arrive simultaneously at the point of assembly, which delayed the operation, and sixty French dragoons, moving under the fire of the place, maintained a sharp skirmish beyond the walls.

Thus the first serious siege undertaken by the British army in the Peninsula was commenced, and to the discredit of the English government, no army was ever so ill provided with the means of prosecuting such an enterprise. The engineer officers were exceedingly zealous, and notwithstanding some defects in the constitution and customs of their corps, tending rather to make regimental than practical scientific officers, many of them were very well versed in the theory of their business. But the ablest trembled when reflecting on their utter destitution of all that belonged to real service. Without a corps of sappers and miners, without a single private who knew how to carry on an approach under fire, they were compelled to attack fortresses defended by the most warlike, practised,

and scientific troops of the age: the best officers and the finest soldiers were obliged to sacrifice themselves in a lamentable manner, to compensate for the negligence and incapacity of a government, always ready to plunge the nation into war, without the slightest care of what was necessary to obtain success. The sieges carried on by the British in Spain were a succession of butcheries, because the commonest materials and the means necessary for their art were denied to the engineers.

Colonel Fletcher's plan was to breach the castle of Badajos, while batteries established on the right bank of the Guadiana should take the defence in reverse, and false attacks against the Pardaleras and Picurina were also to be commenced by re-opening the French trenches. It was, however, necessary to reduce the fort of Christoval ere the batteries for ruining the defences of the castle could be erected. In double operations, whether of the field or of siege, it is essential to move with an exact concert, lest the enemy should crush each in detail; but neither in the investment nor in the attack was this maxim regarded. Captain Squire, although ill provided with tools, was directed to commence a battery against Christoval on the night of the 8th, under a bright moon, and at the distance of only four hundred yards from the rampart. Exposed to a destructive fire of musketry from the fort, and of shot and shells from the town, he continued to work, with great loss, until the 10th, when the enemy, making a furious sally, carried his battery; the French were, indeed, immediately driven back, but the allies pursuing too hotly, were taken in front and flank with grape, and lost four hundred men.* Thus five engineers and seven hundred officers and soldiers of the line were already on the long and bloody list of victims offered to this Moloch, and only one small battery against a small outwork was completed! On the 11th it opened, and before sunset the fire of the enemy had disabled four of its five guns, and killed many more of the besiegers. Nor could any other result be expected, seeing that this single work was exposed to the undivided fire of the fortress, for the approaches against the castle were not yet commenced, and two distant batteries on the false attacks scarcely attracted the attention of the enemy.

To check future sallies, a second battery was erected against the bridge-head, but this was also over-matched, and meanwhile Beresford, having received intelligence that the French army was again in movement, arrested the progress of all the works. On the 12th, believing this information premature, he resumed the labor, directing the trenches to be opened against the castle. The intelligence was, however, true, and being confirmed at twelve o'clock in the

* Appendix 2, §§ 3, 4.

night, the working parties were again drawn off, and measures taken to raise the siege.

SOULT'S SECOND EXPEDITION TO ESTREMADURA.

The Duke of Dalmatia resolved to succor Badajos the moment he heard of Beresford's being in Estremadura, and the tardiness of the latter had not only given the garrison time to organize a defence, but had permitted the French General to tranquillize his province and arrange a system of resistance to the allied army in the Isla. With that view, Soult had commenced additional fortifications at Seville, and renewed the construction of those which had been suspended in other places by the battle of Barosa. He thus deceived Beresford, who believed that, far from thinking to relieve Badajos, he was trembling for his own province. Nothing could be more fallacious. There were seventy thousand fighting men in Andalusia, and Drouet, who had quitted Massena immediately after the battle of Fuentes Onoro, was likewise in march for that province by the way of Avila and Toledo, bringing with him eleven thousand men.

All things being ready, Soult quitted Seville the 10th, with three thousand heavy dragoons, thirty guns, and two strong brigades of infantry under the command of General Werlé and General Godinot. This force, which was composed of troops drawn from the first and fourth corps and from the reserve of Dessolles, entered Ollalla the 11th, and was there joined by General Maransin; but Godinot marched by Constantino to reinforce the fifth corps, which was falling back from Guadalcanal in consequence of Colborne's operations. The 13th the junction was effected with Latour Maubourg, who assumed the command of the heavy cavalry, while Girard, taking that of the fifth corps, advanced to Los Santos. The 14th the French head-quarters reached Villa Franca. Being then within thirty miles of Badajos, Soult caused his heaviest guns to fire salvos during the night, to give notice of his approach to the garrison, but the expedient failed of success, and the 15th, in the evening, his army was concentrated at Santa Marta.

Beresford, as I have before said, remained in a state of uncertainty until the night of the 12th, when he commenced raising the siege, contrary to the earnest representations of the engineers, who promised to put him in possession of the place in three days, if he would persevere. This promise was ill-founded, and, if it had been otherwise, Soult would have surprised him in the trenches: his firmness, therefore, saved the army, and his arrangements for carrying off the stores were admirably executed. The artillery and the platforms were removed in the night of the 13th, and, at twelve

o'clock on the 15th, all the guns and stores on the left bank having been passed over the Guadiana, the gabions and fascines were burnt, and the flying-bridge removed. These transactions were completely masked by the fourth division, which, with the Spaniards, continued to maintain the investment; it was not until the rear-guard was ready to draw off, that the French, in a sally, after severely handling the piquets of Harvey's Portuguese brigade, learned that the siege was raised, but of the cause they were still ignorant.

Beresford held a conference with the Spanish generals at Valverde, on the 13th, when it was agreed to receive a battle at the village of Albuera. Ballesteros' and Blake's corps having already formed a junction at Baracotta, were then falling back upon Almendral, and Blake engaged to bring them into line at Albuera, before twelve o'clock on the 15th. Meanwhile, as Badajos was the centre of an arc, sweeping through Valverde, Albuera, and Talavera Real, it was arranged that Blake's army should watch the roads on the right, the British and the fifth Spanish army those leading upon the centre, and that Madden's Portuguese cavalry should observe those on the left, conducting through Talavera Real. The main body of the British being in the woods near Valverde, could reach Albuera by a half march, and no part of the arc was more than four leagues from Badajos, but the enemy being, on the 14th, still at Los Santos, was eight leagues distant from Albuera; hence, Beresford, thinking that he could not be forestalled on any point of importance to the allies, continued to keep the fourth division in the trenches. Colborne's movable column joined the army on the 14th; Madden then retired to Talavera Real, and Blake's army reached Almendral. Meanwhile the allied cavalry, under General Long, had fallen back before the enemy from Zafra and Los Santos, to Santa Marta, and was there joined by the dragoons of the fourth army.

In the morning of the 15th, the British occupied the left of the position of Albuera, which was a ridge about four miles long, having the Aroya Val de Sevilla in rear, and the Albuera river in front. The right of the army was prolonged towards Almendral, the left towards Badajos, and the ascent from the river was easy, the ground being in all parts practicable for cavalry and artillery. Somewhat in advance of the centre were the bridge and village of Albuera, the former commanded by a battery, the latter occupied by Alten's brigade. The second division, under General William Stewart, was drawn up in one line, the right on a commanding hill over which the Valverde road passed, the left on the road of Badajos, beyond which the order of battle was continued in two lines,

by the Portuguese troops under General Hamilton and Colonel Collins.

The right of the position, which was stronger, and higher, and broader than any other part, was left open for Blake's army, because Beresford, thinking the hill on the Valverde road to be the key of the position, as protecting his only line of retreat, was desirous to secure it with the best troops. The fourth division and the infantry of the fifth army were still before Badajos. General Cole had orders to send the seventeenth Portuguese regiment to Elvas, and to throw a battalion of Spaniards into Olivenza; to bring his second brigade, which was before Christoval, over the Guadiana, by a ford above Badajos, if practicable, and to be in readiness to march at the first notice.

In this posture of affairs, about three o'clock in the evening of the 15th, while Beresford was at some distance on the left, the whole mass of the allied cavalry, closely followed by the French light horsemen, came in from Santa Marta, and as no infantry were posted beyond the Albuera to support them, they passed that river. Thus the wooded heights on the right bank were abandoned to the enemy, and his force and dispositions being thereby effectually concealed, the strength of the allies' position was already sapped. Beresford immediately formed a temporary right wing with the cavalry and artillery, stretching his piquets along the road to Almendral, and sending officers to hasten Blake's movements; but that General, who had only a few miles of good road to march, and who had promised to be in line at noon, did not reach the ground before eleven at night, and his rear was not there before three o'clock in the morning of the 16th; meanwhile, as the enemy was evidently in force on the Albuera road, Cole and Madden were ordered up. The orders failed to reach the latter, but at six o'clock in the morning, the former arrived on the position with the infantry of the fifth army, two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry, and two brigades of the fourth division; the third brigade, under Colonel Kemmis, being unable to cross the Guadiana above Badajos, was in march by Jerumenha. The Spanish troops immediately joined Blake on the right, and two brigades of the fourth division were drawn up in columns behind the second division, and the Portuguese squadrons reinforced Colonel Otway, whose horsemen, of the same nation, were pushed forward in front of the left wing. The mass of the cavalry was concentrated behind the centre, and Beresford, dissatisfied with General Long, ordered General Lumley to assume the chief command.

The position was now occupied by thirty thousand infantry above two thousand cavalry, and thirty-eight pieces of artillery, of

Vol. 3. Plate 4.
Face page 95.

Campo Maior
Cova R.
Guadiana R.
Elvas
Christoval
Gebora R.
Badajos
Montigo
Talavera Real
Merida
Jerumena
Valverde
Olivenza
Albuera
Solano
Almendralejo
Almendral
S. Marta
Villa Franca
Baracotta
Xerez Cavalhero
Los Santos
Burgillo
Zafra
Sierra Morena
Fregenal
Fuente Cantos
Larena
Monasterio

BATTLE OF ALBUERA

16th May 1811.

Lumley
Valverde Road
4th Divn
Harvey
Arroyo R.
Fuzileers
5th Corps
Spaniards
Portuguese
2d Divn
Albuera Road
Albuera
13th Drs
Gl Alten
Albuera
Albuera R.
Feria R.
Godinho

Drawn by Genl Napier

which eighteen were nine-pounders; but the brigade of the fourth division being still absent, the British infantry, the pith and strength of battle, did not exceed seven thousand, and already Blake's arrogance was shaking Beresford's authority. The French had fifty guns, and above four thousand veteran cavalry, but only nineteen thousand chosen infantry; yet being of one nation, obedient to one discipline, and animated by one spirit, their excellent composition amply compensated for the inferiority of numbers, and their General's talent was immeasurably greater than his adversary's.

Soult examined Beresford's position without hindrance, on the evening of the 15th, and having heard that the fourth division was left before Badajos, and that Blake would not arrive before the 17th, he resolved to attack the next morning, for he had detected all the weakness of the English General's position of battle.

The hill in the centre, commanding the Valverde road, was undoubtedly the key of the position if an attack was made parallel to the front. But the heights on the right presented a rough sort of broken table-land, tending backwards towards the Valverde road, and looking into the rear of the line of battle; hence it was evident that, if a mass of troops could be placed there, they must be beaten, or the right wing of the allied army would be rolled up on the centre and pushed into the narrow valley of the Aroya: the Valverde road could then be seized, the retreat cut, and the powerful cavalry of the French would complete the victory. Now the right of the allies and the left of the French approximated to each other, being only divided by a hill, about cannon-shot distance from either, but separated from the allies by the Albuera, and from the French by a rivulet called the Feria. This height, neglected by Beresford, was ably made use of by Soult. During the night he placed behind it the artillery under General Ruty, the fifth corps under Girard, and the heavy dragoons under Latour Maubourg. He thus concentrated fifteen thousand men and forty guns within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing, and yet that General could neither see a man nor draw a sound conclusion as to the real plan of attack.

The light cavalry, the brigades of Godinot and Werlé, and ten guns, still remained at the French Marshal's disposal. These he formed in the woods, extending along the banks of the Feria towards its confluence with the Albuera. Werlé was to keep in reserve; but Godinot was to attack the village and bridge, and to bear strongly against the centre of the position, with a view to attract Beresford's attention, to separate his wings, and to double up his right at the moment when the principal attack should be developed.

BATTLE OF ALBUERA.

During the night, Blake and Cole, as we have seen, arrived with above sixteen thousand men, but so defective was the occupation of the ground, that Soult had no change to make in his plans from this circumstance, and, a little before nine o'clock in the morning, Godinot's division issued from the woods in one heavy column of attack, preceded by ten guns. He was flanked by the right cavalry and followed by Werlé's division of reserve, and, making straight towards the bridge, commenced a sharp cannonade, attempting to force the passage; at the same time Briché, with two regiments of hussars, drew further down the river to observe Colonel Otway's horse.

Dickson's guns posted on the rising ground above the village answered the fire of the French, and ploughed through their columns, which were crowding without judgment towards the bridge, although the stream was passable above and below. Beresford, observing that Werlé's division did not follow closely, was soon convinced that the principal effort would be on the right, and he therefore ordered Blake to form a part of the first and all the second line of the Spanish army, on the broad part of the hills, at right angles to their actual front. Then drawing the Portuguese infantry of the left wing to the centre, he sent one brigade down to support Alten, and directed General Hamilton to hold the remainder in columns of battalions, ready to move to any part of the field. The thirteenth dragoons were posted near the edge of the river, above the bridge, and meanwhile the second division marched to support Blake. The horse-artillery, the heavy dragoons, and the fourth division also took ground to the right, and were posted, the cavalry and guns on a small plain behind the Aroya, and the fourth division in an oblique line about half musket-shot behind them. This done, Beresford galloped to Blake, for that General had refused to change his front, and, with great heat, told Colonel Hardinge, the bearer of the order, that the real attack was at the village and bridge. Beresford had sent again to entreat that he would obey, but this message was as fruitless as the former, and, when the Marshal arrived, nothing had been done. The enemy's columns were, however, now beginning to appear on the right, and Blake yielding to this evidence proceeded to make the evolution, yet with such pedantic slowness, that Beresford, impatient of his folly, took the direction in person.

Great was the confusion and the delay thus occasioned, and ere the troops were completely formed the French were amongst them. For scarcely had Godinot engaged Alten's brigade, when Werlé,