

and the infantry, in addition to their immense labors, were forced to carry their own provisions from the navigable points of the rivers to the top of the mountains.

Soult was strongly affected. "*Tell the emperor,*" he wrote to the minister of war, "*tell him when you make your next report, that on the very soil of France, this is the situation of the army destined to defend the southern provinces from invasion; tell him also, that the unheard-of contradictions and obstacles I meet with shall not make me fail in my duty.*"

On both sides the troops suffered, but the privations of the allies were perhaps greater; for being on higher mountains, more extended, more dependent upon the sea, their distress was in proportion to their distance from the coast. A shorter line had been gained for the supply of the centre, and a bridge, laid down at Andarlassa, gave access to the roots of the Bayonette mountain; yet the troops were fed with difficulty, and so scantily, that Wellington reduced the usual stoppage of pay, and invoked the army by its military honor to sustain with firmness the unavoidable pressure. The effect was striking. Murmurs, loud in the camps before, were hushed instantly, although the soldiers knew that some commissaries, leaguings with the speculators upon the coast, secretly loaded the provision mules with condiments and other luxuries, to sell on the mountains at enormous profit. Desertion was, however, great, more than twelve hundred men went over to the enemy in less than four months; and they were all Germans, Englishmen, or Spaniards; for the Portuguese who abandoned their colors, invariably went back to their own country.

This difficulty of feeding the Anglo-Portuguese, the extreme distress of the Spaniards, and the certainty that they would plunder in France, and so raise the people in arms, together with the uneasy state of the political affairs in the Peninsula, rendered Wellington averse to offensive operations while Napoleon maintained the Elbe. It was impossible to make a formidable and sustained invasion of France with the Anglo-Portuguese alone; and he had neither money nor means of transport to feed the Spaniards, even if policy warranted such a measure; the nature of the country also forbade a decisive victory; and an advance would be attended with the risk of returning to Spain again during the winter, when a retreat would be dangerous and dishonoring. On the 20th of October, however, a letter from the governor of Pampeluna was intercepted, and Lord Fitzroy Somerset, observing the compliment at the beginning was in numerals, ingeniously followed the cue and made out the whole. It announced that the place could not hold out more than a week; and as intelligence of

Napoleon's disasters in Germany became known at the same time, Wellington was induced to yield once more to the wishes of the allied sovereigns and the English ministers, who were earnest that he should invade France.

His intent was to attack Soult's entrenched camp on the 29th, thinking Pampeluna would fall before that period; it did not, and in the passes above Roncevalles the troops were knee-deep in snow. His preparations, however, continued, and strict precautions were taken to baffle the enemy's emissaries; yet Soult was informed by deserters, of the original design and the cause of the delay! He likewise found on a sergeant-major of artillery, taken the 29th, letters and orders indicating an attack by the bridge of Amotz, between D'Erlon's right and Clausel's left; French peasants also, who had passed the outposts, said they had been questioned about that bridge and the roads leading to it. Soult, therefore, augmented his works there, and having thus, as he judged, provided for its safety, and being in no pain for his right, nor for Clausel's position, which was covered by the smaller Rhune, turned his attention towards Foy.

That general was at Bidarray, half-way between St. Jean Pied de Port and Cambo, having to watch certain roads, leading to the Nive from the high valleys, which gave Soult uneasiness for his left. Thinking now the principal attack would be at the Amotz bridge, and not by these roads or St. Jean Pied de Port, as he had first supposed, and as Wellington had indeed once designed, the French marshal resolved to use Foy's force offensively. In this view he instructed him, if St. Jean Pied de Port should be only slightly attacked, to draw all the troops he could spare from its defence to Bidarray; and when the allies assailed Amotz, to seize the Gorospil mountain, and fall upon their right as they descended from the Col de Maya. But if he was himself assailed, he was to call in his detached troops from St. Jean, repossess the Nive by the bridge of Bidarray, make the best defence possible behind that river, and open a communication with Pierre Soult and Trielhard, whose divisions of cavalry were at St. Palais and Orthes.

On the 6th, Foy, thinking the Gorospil difficult to pass, proposed to seize the Col de Yspégui from the side of St. Jean Pied de Port, and so descend into the Bastan. Soult preferred Bidarray, as a safer point and more united with the main body of the army; but he gave Foy a discretionary power to march along the left of the Nive upon Itzatzu and Espelette, if he judged it fitting to reinforce D'Erlon's left, rather than to attack the enemy. And having thus arranged his defence, he directed the prefect of the lower Pyrenees

to post the organized national guards at the issues of all the valleys about St. Jean Pied de Port, but to keep the mass of the people quiet until the allies, penetrating into the country, should at once provoke and offer facilities for an irregular warfare. On the 9th, being still uneasy about the San Martin d'Arosa and Gorospil roads, he brought up his brother's cavalry from St. Palais to the heights above Cambo, and next day the long-expected storm burst.

Allured by some fine weather on the 6th and 7th, Wellington had moved Hill from the Roncevalles to the Bastan, with a view to attack Soult, leaving Mina on the position of Altobiscar and in the Alduides. Orders for the battle, which was to commence the 8th, were issued, but Freyre then declared that he wanted subsistence, and must withdraw a part of his troops. This was a scheme to obtain provisions from the English magazines, and successful, because the attack could not be made without his aid. Forty thousand rations of flour, with a formal intimation that if he did not co-operate, the whole army must retire again into Spain, contented Freyre for the moment; but the extravagant abuses of the Spanish commissariat were plainly exposed when the chief of the staff declared that the flour would only suffice for two days, although there were less than ten thousand soldiers in the field. Spain, therefore, demanded two rations for every fighting man, and yet her troops were starving! When this difficulty was surmounted, heavy rain caused the attack to be again deferred; but on the 10th, ninety thousand combatants of all arms, seventy-four thousand being Anglo-Portuguese, descended to the battle;\* and with them ninety-five pieces of artillery, all of which were with inconceivable vigor brought into action: in this host, however, neither the cavalry, four thousand five hundred strong, nor the Spaniards blockading Pampeluna are reckoned. To meet this power, the French had been increased by conscripts, yet many of those had deserted, and the fighting men did not exceed seventy-nine thousand, including garrisons.† Six thousand were cavalry; and as Foy's operations were extraneous to the line of defence, scarcely sixty thousand infantry and artillery were opposed to the allies.

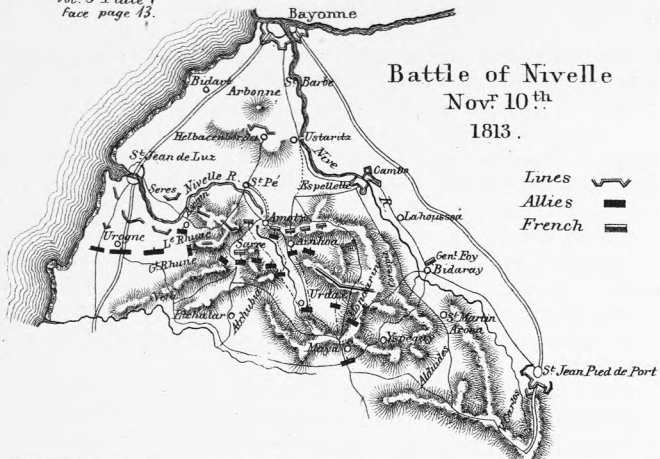
Wellington, seeing the right of Soult's line could not well be forced, designed to hold it in check, while he forced the centre and left, and pushed down the Nivelle to Santa Pè. In this view, the second and sixth British divisions, Hamilton's Portuguese, Morillo's Spaniards, four of Mina's battalions, and Grant's brigade of light cavalry, in all twenty-six thousand men, with nine guns, were collected under Hill in the Bastan to attack D'Erlon. The position

\* Appendix 2, No. 3.

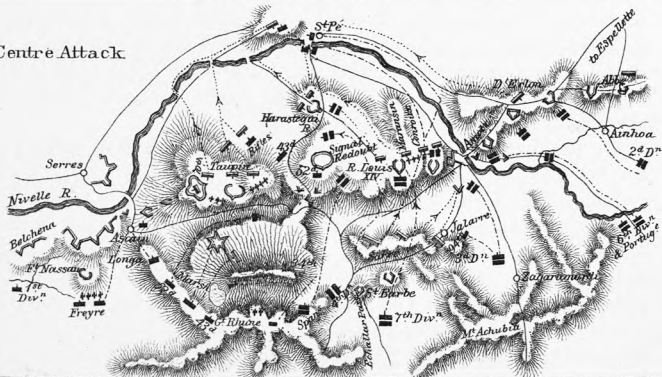
† Appendix 3.

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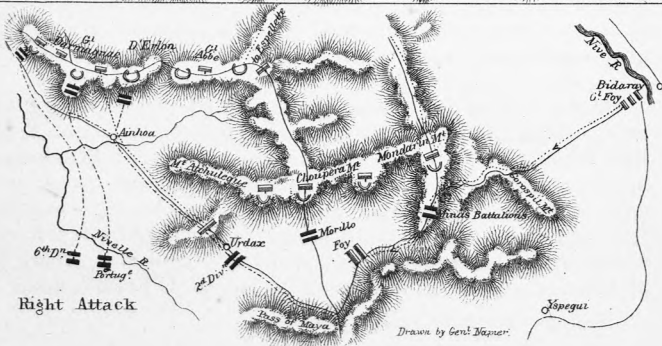




Centre Attack



Right Attack



of Roncevalles was occupied by the remainder of Mina's troops, supported by the blockading force under Carlos d'España. The third, fourth and seventh divisions and Giron's Andalusians, the whole under Beresford, were disposed about Zagaramurdi, the Puerto de Echallar, and the lower parts of those slopes of the greater Rhune which descend upon Sarre.\* On the left of this body, the light division and Longa's Spaniards, both under Charles Alten, were disposed on those slopes of the greater Rhune which led down towards Ascain. Victor Alten's light cavalry with three batteries were placed on the road to Sarre, and six mountain guns followed Giron and Charles Alten. Thus thirty-six thousand fighting men, with twenty-four guns, were concentrated in this quarter to attack Clausel.

Freyre's Gallicians, nine thousand, with six guns, were on Alten's left, at the fort of Calvary and towards Jollimont; being held there with design to fall upon any troops which might come from Serres by the bridge of Ascain, to support Clausel. The first and fifth divisions, Wilson's, Bradford's, and Lord Aylmer's brigades of infantry, Vandeleur's light dragoons, and the heavy German cavalry, in all nineteen thousand men, with fifty-four guns, under Hope, opposed Soult's right wing; and the naval squadron hovered on their flank to aid the land operations.

On the French side, each lieutenant-general had a special position to defend. D'Erlon's first line rested its left on the fortified rocks of Mondarin, which could not be turned; from thence it ran along the Choupera and Atchuleguy mountains, by the forge of Urdax, to the Nivelle. This range, strongly entrenched, was occupied by one of Abbé's and one of D'Armagnac's brigades, Espelette being behind the former, and Ainhoa behind the latter. Their second line, composed of the remaining brigades, was on a broad ridge several miles behind Ainhoa, and its left did not extend beyond the centre of the first line; the right, touching the bridge of Amotz, stretched with a wide flank, because the Nivelle there gave more space: three great redoubts were constructed on this ridge, and a fourth had been commenced close to the bridge.

On the right of this second line beyond the Amotz bridge, Clausel's position extended to Ascain, along a range of heights fortified with redoubts, trenches, and abattis; and as the Nivelle, after passing Amotz, swept in a curve completely round this range to Ascain, both flanks rested alike upon that river; having communication by the bridges at those places on the right and left, and a retreat by the bridges of San Pé and Harastagui in the rear. Two of Clausel's divisions, reinforced by one of D'Erlon's, under Ma

\* Wellington's Order of Movements, MSS.

ransin, were here posted. In front of the left were the redoubts of St. Barbe and Grenada, covering the camp of Sarre; in front of the right, was the smaller Rhune, fortified and occupied by a brigade of Maransin's division; and a new redoubt with abattis was also commenced to cover the approaches to the bridge of Amotz.

On the right of this line, beyond the bridge of Ascain, Daricau's division, also of Clausel's corps, and San Pol's Italian brigade, drawn from Villatte's reserve, held the entrenched camp of Serres, and connected Clausel with Villatte, the latter being on a ridge crossing the gorges of Olette and Jollimont. The French right, under Reille, strongly fortified on the lower ground and partially covered by inundations, was nearly impregnable.

Soult's weakest point was the opening between the Rhune mountains and the Nivelle. Gradually narrowing as it approached the bridge of Amotz, this space was the most open, the least fortified; and the Nivelle, fordable above that bridge, could not hamper the allies' movements. A powerful force, acting in that direction, could pass by D'Erlon's first line, break in upon the right of his second line and upon Clausel's left, and outflank both—and in that view Wellington designed his battle.

Hill, leaving Mina's troops on the Gorospil mountain, facing the rocks of Mondarin, moved in the night by the different passes of the Col de Maya, designing that Morillo should menace the French on the Choupera and Atchuleguy mountains, while the second division attacked Ainho and Urdax. The sixth division and Hamilton's Portuguese were to assault the works covering the bridge of Amotz, either on the right or left bank of the river, according to circumstances, and thus twenty-six thousand men were combined against D'Erlon's position from that side. On their left Beresford's corps was assembled. The third division, under Colville, descending from Zagaramurdi, was to move against the unfinished redoubts and entrenchments covering the bridge of Amotz on the left bank of the Nivelle; thus turning D'Erlon's right, when it was attacked in front by Hill. On the left of the third division, the seventh, descending from the Echallar pass, was to storm the Grenada redoubt, and by the village of Sarre to assail Clausel's main position abreast with the attack of the third division. On the left of the seventh, the fourth division, assembling on the lower slopes of the greater Rhune, was to descend upon the San Barbe, and then moving through Sarre, also to assail Clausel abreast with the seventh division. On the left of the fourth division, Giron's Andalusians, gathered higher up on the flank of the great Rhune, were to move abreast with the others, leaving Sarre on their right; and they

were to drive the enemy from the lower slopes of the smaller Rhune, and, in concert with the rest, attack Clausel. In this way Hill's and Beresford's corps, forming a mass of forty thousand infantry, were to be thrust on both sides of the bridge of Amotz between Clausel and D'Erlon.

Charles Alten and Longa, having together eight thousand men, were likewise to attack Clausel on the left of Giron, while Freyre approached the bridge of Ascain. But Alten could not assail Clausel's right without storming the smaller Rhune; and that mountain outwork, a hog's-back ridge, rising abruptly out of table-land, and parallel with the greater Rhune, was inaccessible along its front, which was precipitous, and from fifty to two hundred feet high; however, on the French left, the rocks gradually decreased, descending by a long slope to the valley of Sarre; and about two-thirds of the way down, the thirty-fourth French regiment was placed, with an advanced post on some isolated crags, situated in the hollow between the two Rhunes. On the French right, the hog's-back sunk indeed by degrees into the plain or platform, but was there covered by a marsh scarcely passable; hence, the attacking troops had first to move up against the perpendicular rocks in front, and then file to their left under fire, between the marsh and the lower crags, until they gained an accessible point, from whence to fight their way along the narrow ridge of the hog's-back, the bristles of which were huge perpendicular crags connected with walls of loose stones, so as to form small forts or castles communicating with each other by narrow footways, and rising one above another, until the culminant point was attained. The table-land beyond this ridge was extensive, terminating in a very deep ravine on every side, save a narrow space on the French right of the marsh, where a loose stone wall was constructed, running perpendicularly from behind the hog's-back, and ending in a star fort overhanging the edge of the ravine. This rampart and fort and the hog's-back itself were defended by Barbot's brigade. The line of retreat was towards a low narrow neck of land, bridging the deep ravine and linking the Rhune to Clausel's main position. At this neck a reserve was placed, partly to sustain the thirty-fourth French regiment on the slope of the mountain, partly to protect the neck itself on the side of Sarre.

Alten collected his troops at midnight on that slope of the greater Rhune, which descended towards Ascain. The main body of the light division turning the marsh by the left, was to assail the stone wall and overlap the star fort by the ravine beyond; Longa, stretching still farther on the left, was to turn the smaller Rhune altogether; and the forty-third regiment, supported by the seven-



teenth Portuguese, was to assail the hog's-back. One battalion of riflemen and the mountain guns were left on the summit of the greater Rhune, with orders to assail the craggy post below, and connect Alten's attack with that of Giron; and all these troops gained their stations so secretly, the enemy had no suspicion of their presence, though the columns were lying within half musket-shot of the works for several hours. Towards morning, five or six guns fired in a hurried manner, from the low ground near the sea, broke the stillness; but on the Rhune all was quiet, and the British troops awaited the rising of the sun, when three guns, fired from the Atchubia mountain, were to give the signal of attack.

#### BATTLE OF THE NIVELLE.

(Plan 1, page 12.)

Day broke with great splendor, and as the first ray of light played on the summit of the lofty Atchubia, the signal guns were fired in rapid succession. Then the British leaped up, and the French, beholding with astonishment their columns rushing forward from the flank of the great Rhune, run to the defences with much tumult. They opened a few pieces, which were answered from the top of the greater Rhune by the mountain artillery, and at the same moment two companies of the forty-third were detached to cross the marsh if possible, and keep down the fire from the lower part of the hog's-back; the remainder of the regiment, partly in line, partly in a column of reserve, advanced against the high rocks. From these crags the French shot fast, but the quick even movement of the British line deceived their aim, and the soldiers, running forward very swiftly, though the ground was rough, turned suddenly between the rocks and the marsh, and were immediately joined by the two companies which had passed that obstacle notwithstanding its depth. Then all together jumped into the lower works; but the men, exhausted by their exertions, for they had passed over half a mile of very difficult ground with a wonderful speed, remained for a few minutes inactive, within half pistol-shot of the first stone castle, from whence came a sharp and biting musketry. When they recovered breath, they arose, and with a stern shout, commenced the assault. The French, as numerous as their assailants had, for six weeks, been laboring on their well-contrived castles; but strong and valiant in arms must the soldiers have been who stood in that hour before the veterans of the forty-third. One French grenadier officer only dared to sustain the rush. Standing alone on the high wall of the first castle, and flinging large stones with both his hands, a noble

figure, he fought to the last and fell, while his men, shrinking on each side, sought safety among the rocks on his flanks. Close and confused, then, was the action; man met man at every turn, but with a rattling musketry, sometimes struggling in the intricate narrow paths, sometimes climbing the loose stone walls, the British soldiers won their desperate way, until they had carried the second castle, called by the French the place of arms and the magpie's-nest, because of a lofty pillar of rock which rose above it, and on which a few marksmen were perched. From these points the defenders were driven into their last castle, which being higher and larger than the others, and covered by a natural ditch or cleft in the rocks, fifteen feet deep, was called the Donjon.

There they made a stand, and the assailants, having advanced so far as to look into the rear of the rampart and star-fort on the table-land below, suspended the vehement throng of their attack for a while; partly to gather head for storming the Donjon, partly to fire on the enemy beneath them, who were now warmly engaged with the two battalions of riflemen, the Portuguese caçadores and the seventeenth Portuguese. This last regiment was to have followed the forty-third, but seeing how rapidly and surely the latter were carrying the rocks, had moved at once against the traverse on the other side of the marsh; and very soon the French defending the rampart, being thus pressed in front and warned, by the direction of the fire, that they were turned on the ridge above—seeing also the fifty-second, forming the extreme left of the division, now emerging from the deep ravine beyond the star-fort on the other flank, abandoned their works. Then the forty-third, gathering a strong head, stormed the Donjon; some leaped with a shout down the deep cleft in the rock, others turned it by the narrow paths on each flank, and the enemy abandoned the loose walls at the moment they were being scaled; thus, in twenty minutes, eight hundred old soldiers were hustled out of this labyrinth—yet not so easily, but the victors lost eleven officers and sixty-seven men.

All the mountain was now cleared of the French, for the riflemen dropped perpendicularly from the greater Rhume upon the post of crags, in the hollow, and seized it with small loss; but they were ill-seconded by Giron's Andalusians, and hardly handled by the thirty-fourth French regiment, which obstinately clung to the slope, and covered the flight of the confused crowd rushing down the mountain behind them, towards the connecting neck of land; at that point also, all rallied, and seemed inclined to renew the action, yet, after some hesitation continued their retreat. This favorable moment for a decisive stroke had been looked for by the commander of the forty-third, but the officer entrusted with the

reserve companies of the regiment had thrown them needlessly into the fight, thus rendering it impossible to collect a body strong enough to assail such a heavy mass. The contest at the stone wall and star-fort, shortened by the rapid success on the hog's back, had not been very severe; Kempt, however, always conspicuous for his valor, was severely wounded; nevertheless, he did not quit the field, and soon re-formed his brigade on the platform he had thus so gallantly won. The fifty-second, having turned the position by the ravine, was now approaching the enemy's line of retreat; but Alten, following his instructions, halted the division partly in the ravine itself to the left of the neck, partly on the table-land. During the action, Longa got near Ascain in connexion with Freyre, and, in that state, the enemy now and then cannonading, Alten awaited the progress of the army on his right; for the columns there had a long way to march, and it was essential to regulate the movements.

The signal-guns from the Atchubia, which sent the light division against the Rhune, had also put the fourth and seventh divisions in movement against the redoubts of San Barbe and Grenada, and eighteen guns were instantly placed in battery against the former. While they poured their stream of shot, the troops advanced with scaling-ladders, and the skirmishers of the fourth division soon got into the rear of the work; whereupon the French leaped out and fled, and Ross's battery of horse artillery, galloping to a rising ground in rear of the Grenada fort, drove them from there also; then, the divisions carried the village of Sarre and the position beyond it, and advanced to the attack of Clause's main position.

It was now eight o'clock, and from the smaller Rhune a splendid spectacle of war opened upon the view. On the left, the ships of war slowly sailing to and fro, were exchanging shots with the fort of Socoa; and Hope, menacing all the French lines in the low ground, sent the sound of a hundred pieces of artillery bellowing up the rocks, to be answered by nearly as many from the tops of the mountains. On the right, the summit of the great Atchubia was just lighted by the rising sun, and fifty thousand men, rushing down its enormous slopes with ringing shouts, seemed to chase the receding shadows into the deep valley. The plains of France, so long overlooked from the towering crags of the Pyrenees, were to be the prize of battle, and the half-famished soldiers in their fury broke through the iron barrier erected by Soult, as if it were but a screen of reeds.

A space of seven or eight miles contained the principal action; but the skirts of battle spread wide, and in no point had the combinations failed. Hill, after a long and difficult night march, had

neared the enemy a little before seven o'clock. Sending Morillo and Mina against the Mondarain and Atchuleguy rocks, he with the second division brushed away the French brigade from Urdax and Ainhoa. Then the sixth division and Hamilton's Portuguese passed the Nivelle lower down, and by the right bank threatened the bridge of Amotz; thus the Spaniards held Abbé in play on the rocks, while three Anglo-Portuguese divisions advanced against D'Erlon's second position. The ground was, however, so rugged, they could not close before eleven o'clock on the redoubts, each of which contained five hundred men. They were placed along the crest of a ridge thickly clothed with bushes, covered by a deep ravine, and very difficult to attack; but Clinton turned the ravine with the sixth division on the left, drove the French from the half-finished works covering the bridge of Amotz, and wheeling to his right, approached the nearest redoubt, whereupon the garrison abandoned it. Then Hamilton, passing the ravine on Clinton's right, menaced the next redoubt, and the second division, under Byng, also passing, stormed the third redoubt. D'Armagnac now set fire to his hutted camp, and retreated to Helbacen de Borda behind San Pé, pursued by Clinton. Abbé's second brigade, on the French left, was separated from D'Armagnac by a ravine; but he also, after some hesitation, retreated towards Espelette and Cambo, where his other brigade, falling back before Morillo, rejoined him.

It was the progress of the battle on the left of the Nive, that rendered D'Erlon's defence so feeble. After the fall of the St. Barbe and Grenada redoubts, Conroux endeavored to defend the heights of Sarre; but while the fourth and seventh divisions and the ninety-fourth regiment, detached from the third division, carried that point, the third division, being on the right and less opposed, pushed towards the bridge of Amotz, forming, in conjunction with the sixth division, the small end of the wedge into which Beresford's and Hill's corps were now thrown. The French were thus driven from all their unfinished works covering that bridge on both sides of the Nivelle, and Conroux's division, spread from Sarre to Amotz, was broken by superior numbers at every point. He, indeed, vigorously defended the finished works around the bridge itself, but soon fell, mortally wounded; then the third division, seizing the bridge, established itself on the heights between that structure and the redoubt of Louis XIV., which was also unfinished. This happened about eleven o'clock, and D'Erlon, fearing to be cut off from St. Pé, yielded, as we have seen, at once to the attack of the sixth division; and at the same time, Conroux's troops fell back in disorder from Sarre, closely pursued by the fourth and seventh divisions, which were immediately established on the left

of the third. Thus the communication between Clausel and D'Erlon was cut, the left flank of one, the right flank of the other broken, and the direct communication between Hill and Beresford was secured by one and the same blow.

Clausel, however, still stood firm with Taupin's and Maransin's divisions; and the latter, now complete by the return of Barbot's brigade from the smaller Rhune, occupied the redoubt of Louis XIV., and having eight field-pieces, attempted to cover the flight of Conroux's troops. His guns were soon silenced by Ross's horse artillery, the only battery which had surmounted the difficulties of the ground after passing Sarre. The infantry were then assailed in front by the fourth and seventh divisions, in flank by the third division; the redoubt was stormed, the garrison bayoneted, Conroux's men continued to fly, Maransin's, after a stiff combat, were cast headlong into the ravines behind their position, and he was taken, yet afterwards escaped in the confusion. Giron then came up on the left of the fourth division, somewhat late, and after having abandoned the riflemen on the lower slopes of the smaller Rhune.

On the French side, Taupin's troops and a large body of conscripts, forming Clausel's right wing, still remained to fight. Their left rested on a large work called the signal redoubt, which had no artillery, but overlooked the whole position; the right was covered by two redoubts, overhanging a ravine, which separated them from the camp of Serres, and some works in the ravine itself protected the communication by the bridge of Ascain. Behind the signal redoubt, on a ridge crossing the road to San Pè, by which Maransin and Conroux's divisions were now flying in disorder, there was another work called the redoubt of Harastagua; and Clausel, thinking he might still dispute the victory if his reserve division could come to his aid from the camp of Serres, drew the thirty-first regiment from Taupin, and posted it in front of this redoubt. His design was to rally Maransin's and Conroux's troops there, and so form a new line, the left on the Harastagua, the right on the signal redoubt, into which last he threw six hundred of the eighty-eighth regiment. In this position, having a retreat by the bridge of Ascain, he thought to renew the battle; but his plan failed at the moment of conception, because Taupin could not stand before the light division which was now again in full action.

About half-past nine, Alten seeing the whole of the columns on his right so far as the eye could reach, well engaged with the enemy, had crossed the low neck of land in his front. The fifty-second regiment first passed, with a very narrow front, under a destructive cannonade and fire of musketry from entrenchments on

the opposite mountain; a road, coming from Ascain by the ravine, wound up the position; and as the fifty-second pushed their attack along it, the enemy abandoned his entrenchments on each side, and forsook even his crowning works above. This formidable regiment was followed by the other troops. Taupin, though his division was weak and now diminished by the absence of the thirty-first regiment, awaited the attack, being supported by the conscripts drawn up in his rear; but at that time Longa, having turned the smaller Rhune, approached Ascain in conjunction with Freyre's troops,\* and their skirmishers opened a distant musketry against the works covering that bridge; panic seized the French, the seventieth regiment abandoned the two redoubts above, and the conscripts were withdrawn.† Clausel ordered Taupin to retake the forts, but this only added to the disorder. The seventieth regiment disbanded entirely, and were not reassembled until next day. There remained only four regiments unbroken, the eighty-eighth, which was in the signal redoubt, two under Taupin in the rear of the works on the right, and the thirty-first, which covered the Harastaguaia, now the only line of retreat.

Clausel, anxious to bring off the regiment from the signal redoubt, ordered Taupin to charge on one side, intending to do the same himself on the other, at the head of the thirty-first; but the latter was vigorously attacked by the Portuguese of the seventh division, while the fourth division rapidly interposed between it and the signal redoubt, which was moreover turned on its right at musket-shot by the forty-third and Barnard's riflemen. Wherefore Taupin, instead of charging, was himself charged in front by the riflemen; and being menaced at the same time in flank by the fourth division, retreated, closely pursued by Barnard, until that intrepid officer fell dangerously wounded. During this struggle, the seventh division broke the thirty-first, and the rout was complete. The French fled to the different bridges over the Nivelle, and the signal redoubt was left to its fate.

This formidable work barred the way of the light division, but it was of no value to the defence, when the forts on its flanks were abandoned. Colborne approached it in front with the fifty-second regiment, Giron menaced it on Colborne's right, Cole was passing to its rear, and Kempt's brigade was turning it on the left. Colborne, whose military judgment was seldom at fault, halted under the brow of the conical hill on which the work was situated; but some Spaniards, making a vaunting though feeble demonstration of attacking it on his right, were beaten back, and at that moment, a

\* Clausel, MSS.

† Taupin's Report, MSS.

staff-officer, without warrant, for Alten on the spot assured the author of this history he sent no such order, rode up and directed Colborne to advance. It was no moment for remonstrance, and, covered by the steepness of the hill, he reached the flat top, forty yards from the work; the rush was then made, but a wide ditch, thirty feet deep, well fraised and palisaded, stopped him short, and the fire of the enemy stretched all the foremost men dead. Colborne, escaping miraculously, for he was always at the head and on horseback, immediately led the regiment, under cover of the brow, to another point, and thinking to take the French unawares, made another rush, yet with the same result; at three different places did he rise to the surface in this manner, and each time the French fire swept away the head of his column. Resorting then to persuasion, he held out a white handkerchief, and summoned the commandant, pointing out to him how his work was surrounded, how hopeless his defence; he yielded, having had only one man killed, whereas on the British side there fell two hundred soldiers, of a regiment never surpassed in arms since arms were first borne by men.

During this affair, Clausel had crossed the Nivelle in great disorder; Maransin's and Conroux's troops near San Pé, the thirty-first regiment at Harastagua, Taupin between that place and the bridge of Serres. Pursued by the third and seventh divisions, the skirmishers of the former crossed by Amotz and a bridge above San Pé, and entered the latter place while the French were in the act of passing the river below. It was now past two o'clock; Conroux's troops pushed on to Helbacen de Borda, a fortified position on the road from San Pé to Bayonne, where they were joined by Taupin and D'Erlon with D'Armagnac's division; but Clausel rallied Maransin's men, and took post on some heights immediately above San Pé. Soult, who had on the first alarm hurried from St. Jean de Luz to the camp of Serres with all his reserve artillery and spare troops, now menaced the allies' left flank by Ascain. Wellington then halted Cole, Alten and Giron on the reverse slopes of Clausel's original position, facing the camp of Serres; waiting until Clinton, then following D'Armagnac on the right of the Nivelle, was well advanced. When assured of Clinton's progress, he crossed the Nivelle with the third and seventh divisions, and drove Maransin from his new position; but with a hard struggle, in which Inglis was wounded, and the fifty-first and sixty-eighth regiments handled very roughly. This ended the battle in the centre, for darkness was coming on, and the troops were exhausted, especially the sixth division, which had been marching or fighting for twenty-four hours. However, three

divisions were then firmly established in rear of Soult's right wing, of whose operations it is time to treat.

In front of Reille's entrenchments, were two advanced positions: the camp of the Sans Culottes on his right, the Bons Secours in his centre, covering Urogne. The first was carried early in the morning by the fifth division, which advanced to the inundation covering the heights of Bordegain and Ciboure. The second was taken by Halket's Germans and the guards; and the eighty-fifth regiment, of Lord Aylmer's brigade, drove a French battalion out of Urogne. The first division then menaced the camp of Belchena, and the German skirmishers passed a stream covering part of the line; they were, however, soon driven back by the enemy, whose musketry and cannonade were brisk along the whole front. Freyre, advancing from Jollimont and the Calvaire, on the right of the first division, placed eight guns in battery against the Nassau redoubt, constructed on the ridge occupied by Villatte to cover the approaches to Ascain. There he was opposed by his own countrymen, under Casa Palacio, who commanded the remains of Joseph's Spanish guards; and during the fight, Freyre's skirmishers on the right united, as we have seen, with Longa. This false battle was maintained along the whole line until nightfall, with equal loss of men, but great advantage to the allies; because it occupied Reille's two divisions and Villatte's reserve, and prevented the troops in the camp of Serres from passing the bridge of Ascain to aid Clausel. However, when he was overpowered, and Wellington had entered San Pé, Daricau and the Italian brigade withdrew from Serres, and Villatte occupied it; whereupon, Freyre and Longa entered the town of Ascain, but Villatte held the camp until Reille had withdrawn into St. Jean de Luz, and destroyed all the bridges on the lower Nivelle; when that was effected, the whole retired, and at daybreak reached the heights of Bidart, on the road to Bayonne. During the night, the allies halted on the position they had gained in the centre; but the accidental conflagration of a wood completely separated the piquets towards Ascain from the main body, and spreading far and wide over the heath, lighted up all the hills, a blazing sign of war to France.

The 11th the army advanced in order of battle. Hope forded the river above St. Jean de Luz with his infantry, and marched on Bidart; Beresford moved by the roads leading upon Arbonne; Hill, communicating by his right with Morillo, who was on the rocks of Mondarain, brought his left forward into communication with Beresford, and with his centre took possession of Suraide and Espelette, facing Cambo. The time required to restore the bridges for the artillery at Ciboure and the change of front on the right.



rendered these movements slow, and gave Soult time to rally his army upon a third line of fortified camps, the right resting on the coast at Bidart, the centre at Helbacen Borda, the left at Ustaritz, on the Nive. This front was about eight miles, but the works were only slightly advanced, and Soult, dreading a second battle on so wide a field, drew back his centre and left to Arbonne and Arauntz, broke down the bridges on the Nive at Ustaritz, and at two o'clock a slight skirmish, engaged by the allies in the centre, closed the day's proceedings. Next morning, the French retired to the ridge of Beyris, their right near Anglet, their left in the entrenched camp of Bayonne.

During this movement, a dense fog arrested the allies, but when the day cleared, Hope took post at Bidart on the left, and Beresford occupied Ahetze, Arbonne, and the hill of San Barbe, in the centre. Hill endeavored to pass the fords and restore the broken bridges of Ustaritz, and he also made a demonstration against the works at Cambo; but the rain, which fell heavily in the mountains on the 11th, rendered the fords impassable, and both points were defended successfully by Foy. That officer's operations had been isolated. For though D'Erlon, mistrusting the strength of his own position, had in the night of the 9th sent him an order to move on Espelette from Bidarray, it arrived too late; Foy, following Soult's previous instructions, drove Mina from the Gorospil mountain in the morning of the 10th, and flanking Morillo, forced him also back, fighting to the Puerto de Maya. But then the receding sound and smoke of D'Erlon's battle caused the French general, who had lost a colonel and one hundred and fifty men, to retire; he however took much baggage and a hundred prisoners, and continuing his retreat all night, reached Cambo and Ustaritz the 11th, in time to relieve Abbé's division at those posts, which on the 12th he defended against Hill.

#### OBSERVATIONS.

1. In this battle Soult was driven in a few hours from a mountain position which he had been fortifying for three months. He lost four thousand two hundred and sixty-five men and officers, including twelve or fourteen hundred prisoners. One general was killed; all his field-magazines at St. Jean de Luz and Espelette fell into the hands of the victors; and fifty-one pieces of artillery were taken, the greater part having been abandoned in the redoubts of the low country. The allies had two generals, Kempt and Byng, wounded, and they lost two thousand six hundred and ninety-four men and officers.

2. Soult fared as most generals will, who seek by extensive lines

to supply the want of numbers or of hardiness in the troops. Against rude commanders and undisciplined soldiers lines may avail, seldom against accomplished generals, never when the assailants are the better soldiers. Cæsar at Alesia resisted the Gauls, but his lines served him not at Dyrrachium against Pompey. Crassus failed in Calabria against Spartacus. Marlborough broke through all the French lines in Flanders; and if Wellington succeeded at Torres Vedras, it was perhaps because his lines were not attacked. It may be Soult was seduced by that example, for his works were almost as gigantic and upon the same plan; that is to say, a river on one flank, the ocean on the other, the front on mountains covered with redoubts and partially protected by inundations. But he had only three months to complete his system, his labors were under the gaze of his enemy, and his troops, twice defeated during the execution, were inferior in confidence and numbers to the assailants. Wellington's lines had been labored for a whole year; Massena only knew of them when they stopped his progress; and his army, inferior in numbers, had been repulsed in the recent battle of Busaco.

3 This criticism does not apply to entrenched camps within compass around which an active army moves as on a pivot, delivering or avoiding battle according to circumstances; it applies only to those extensive covering lines by which soldiers are taught to consider themselves inferior to their enemies. A general is thus precluded from showing himself at important points and at critical periods; he is unable to encourage his troops or correct errors; and sudden combinations of genius are excluded by the necessity of adhering to the works, while the assailants may menace every point and select where to break through. The defenders seeing the large attacking columns, and having no proportionate masses to oppose, become fearful, knowing there must be some weak point which will be the measure of strength for the whole. But the assailants fall on with a heat and vehemence belonging to those who act voluntarily and on the offensive; each mass strives to outdo those on its right and left, and failure is only a repulse; whereas the assailed, having no resource but victory, look to their flanks, and are more anxious about their neighbors' fighting than their own.

4. All these disadvantages were illustrated on the Nivelle. D'Erton attributed his defeat to Conroux's losing the bridge of Amotz; and to that also Maransin traced his discomfiture.\* Taupin laid his defeat at Maransin's door, and Clausel ascribed it to want of firmness in the troops; but he also said if Daricau had come from the

\* Reports of French generals to Soult, MSS.

camp of Serres to his aid, he would have held his ground. Soult thought Clausel had rashly attempted to defend Sarre after the San Barbe and Grenada redoubts were taken, and thus let Conroux be overwhelmed in detail.\* He should, Soult said, have concentrated his three divisions on the main position, and there, covered by the small Rhune, should have been victorious; and it was scarcely credible that such entrenchments as Clausel and D'Erlon had to defend should have been carried;—for his part, he relied on their strength so confidently, as to think the allies must sacrifice twenty-five thousand men to force them, and perhaps fail then. He had been on the right when the battle began, no reports came to him, he could judge of events only by the fire; and when he reached the camp of Serres with his reserve troops and artillery, Clausel's works were lost! His arrival had, however, paralyzed the march of three divisions. This was true, yet there seems some foundation for Clausel's complaint, namely, that he had for five hours fought on his main position, and during that time no help had come, although the camp of Serres was close at hand, the distance from St. Jean de Luz to that place only four miles, and the attack in the low ground evidently a feint. This, then, was Soult's error. He suffered Hope to hold in play twenty-five thousand men in the low ground, while fifteen thousand under Clausel lost the battle on the hills.

5. The French army was inferior in numbers, and many of the works were unfinished; yet two strong divisions, Daricau's and Foy's, were quite thrown out of the fight; for the slight offensive movement made by the latter, produced no effect whatever. Vigorous counter-attacks are no doubt essential to a good defence, and it was in allusion to this that Napoleon, speaking of Joseph's position behind the Ebro, in the beginning of the war, said, "if a river was as broad and rapid as the Danube, it would be nothing without secure points for passing to the offensive." The same maxim affects lines, and Soult applied this principle grandly when he proposed the descent upon Aragon to Suchet; but he conceived it meanly, when he ordered Foy to attack by the Gorospil mountain. That general's numbers were too few, the direction of his march false; one regiment in the battle at the decisive moment, would have been worth three on such a secondary point. Foy's retreat was inevitable, if D'Erlon failed, and wanting Foy's aid, D'Erlon did fail. What success could Foy obtain? He might have driven Mina over the Col de Maya and through the Bastan; he might have defeated Morillo, and perhaps have taken Hill's baggage; yet this would have been little against the allies' success at Amotz, and the deeper he penetrated the more difficult would have been

\* Soult, MSS.

his retreat. The incursion into the Bastan by Yspegui, proposed by him on the 6th, although properly rejected by Soult, would have produced greater effects than the one executed by Gorospil on the 10th; for Hill's troops were then in march by brigades through the Alduides, and a sudden attack might have caused a delay of the great battle beyond the 10th; then the heavy rains which set in the 11th, would have rendered it difficult to attack at all. Soult would thus have had time to complete his works.

6. It has been advanced as a minor cause of defeat that the French troops were posted in front, whereas they should have been in rear of the redoubts; this, if so, was not by design, for Clausel's report of the action expressly states that Maransin was directed to form in rear and charge when the assailants were between the redoubts and the abattis. It is, however, needless to pry closely, when the great cause lies broad on the surface—Wellington directed superior numbers with superior skill. The proof will be found in the following analysis, but it must be noted that the conscripts are not included in the French force—they were kept in masses behind and never engaged.

Abbé's division of five thousand old soldiers were paralyzed by the operations of Longa and Mina, who at the same time entirely occupied Foy's division—thus six thousand of Wellington's worst soldiers sufficed to employ twelve thousand of Soult's best troops, and meanwhile Hill fell with twenty thousand upon the five thousand under D'Armagnac. The battle was in this manner secured on the right bank of the Nivelle, while Beresford on the left bank thrust twenty-four thousand against the ten thousand composing Conroux's and Maransin's divisions. Hill and Beresford also, in advancing, formed a wedge towards the bridge of Amotz, whereby forty-four thousand men were impelled against the fifteen thousand under D'Armagnac, Conroux, and Maransin; and these last could not even fight together, because part of Conroux's troops were previously defeated near Sarre, and a brigade of Maransin's was beaten on the smaller Rhune, before the main attack commenced. Finally, Alten, having eight thousand combatants, first defeated Barbot's brigade on the Rhune, and then fell on Taupin, who had only three thousand, and the rest of the French army was held in check by Freyre and Hope. Thus, more than fifty thousand good and confident troops were suddenly thrown upon eighteen thousand, good men also, but dispirited by previous defeats. Against such a thunderbolt there was no defence in the French works. Was it then a simple matter for Wellington so to combine his battle? The mountains, on whose huge flanks he gathered his fierce soldiers, the roads he opened, the horrid crags he surmounted, the headlong

steeps he descended, the wild regions through which he poured the destructive fire of more than ninety guns, these and the reputation of the French commander, furnish the everlasting reply.

And yet he did not compass all that he designed. The French right escaped, because when he passed the Nivelles at San Pé, he had only two divisions in hand; the sixth had not come up; three were watching the camp at Serres, and before he could descend in force to the low ground the day closed. The great object of the battle was, therefore, unattained; and it may be a question, seeing short light and bad roads were not unexpected, whether the principal attack should not have been directed entirely against Clausel. Carlos D'España and the remainder of Mina's battalions could have reinforced Morillo with five thousand men to occupy D'Erlon's attention, and it was not essential to defeat him; for though he attributed his defeat to Clausel's reverse, that general did not complain that D'Erlon's flight endangered his position. This arrangement would have enabled Hill to reinforce Beresford, and have given Wellington three additional divisions with which to cross the Nivelles before two o'clock. Soult's right wing could not then have escaped.

7. From some oversight, the despatches did but scant and tardy justice to the light division. Acting alone, for Longa went off towards Ascain, and scarcely fired a shot, that division, only four thousand seven hundred strong, first carried the smaller Rhune, defended by Barbot, and then beat Taupin from the main position, thus driving superior numbers from the strongest works; and being less than one-sixth of the whole force directed against Clausel, those matchless veterans defeated one-third of his corps. Many brave men they lost, and of two who fell I will speak.

The first, low in rank, for he was but a lieutenant, rich in honor, for he bore many scars, was young of days—he was only nineteen, and had seen more combats and sieges than he could count years. So slight in person, and of such surpassing and delicate beauty, that the Spaniards often thought him a girl disguised in man's clothing; he was yet so vigorous, so active, so brave, that the most daring and experienced veterans watched his looks on the field of battle, and, implicitly following where he led, would like children obey his slightest sign in the most difficult situations. His education was incomplete, yet were his natural powers so happy, that the keenest and best-furnished intellects shrunk from an encounter of wit; and every thought and aspiration was proud and noble, indicating future greatness, if destiny had so willed it. Such was Edward Freer, of the forty-third. The night before the battle, he had that strange anticipation of coming death so often felt by military men; he was struck with three balls at the first storming

of the Rhune rocks, and the sternest soldiers wept, even in the middle of the fight, when they saw him fall.

On the same day, and at the same hour, was killed Colonel Thomas Lloyd. He likewise had been a long time in the forty-third. Under him, Freer had learnt the rudiments of his profession; but in the course of the war, promotion placed Lloyd at the head of the ninety-fourth, and it was leading that regiment, he fell. In him, also, were combined mental and bodily powers of no ordinary kind. Graceful symmetry, herculean strength, and a countenance frank and majestic, gave the true index of his nature; for his capacity was great and commanding, and his military knowledge extensive, both from experience and study. Of his mirth and wit, well known in the army, it only need be said, that he used the latter without offence, yet so as to increase his ascendancy over those with whom he held intercourse; for though gentle, he was ambitious, valiant, and conscious of fitness for great exploits. And he, like Freer, was prescient of and predicted his own fall, but with no abatement of courage; for when he received the mortal wound, a most painful one, he would not suffer himself to be moved, and remained to watch the battle, making observations upon its changes, until death came. It was thus, at the age of thirty, that the good, the brave, the generous Lloyd died. Tributes to his merit have been published by Wellington and by one of his own poor soldiers;\* by the highest, and by the lowest! To their testimony, I add mine; let those who served on equal terms with him, say whether in aught it has exaggerated his deserts.

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## CHAPTER II.

Soult occupies the entrenched camp of Bayonne, and the line of the Nive river—Lord Wellington unable to pursue his victory, from the state of the roads—Bridge-head of Cambo abandoned by the French—Excesses of the Spanish troops—Lord Wellington's indignation—He sends them back to Spain—Various skirmishes in front of Bayonne—The Generals J. Wilson and Vandeleur are wounded—Mina plunders the Val de Baygorry—Is beaten by the National Guards—Passage of the Nive and battles in front of Bayonne—Combat of the 10th—Combat of the 11th—Combat of the 12th—Battle of St. Pierre—Observations.

SOULT at first designed to leave part of his forces in the entrenched camp of Bayonne, and take a flanking position behind the Nive, half-way between Bayonne and St. Jean Pied de Port; his left secured by the entrenched mountain of Ursouia, his right on the heights above Cambo, the bridge-head of which would give him the power of making offensive movements. He thus hoped to

\* The Eventful Life of a Sergeant.

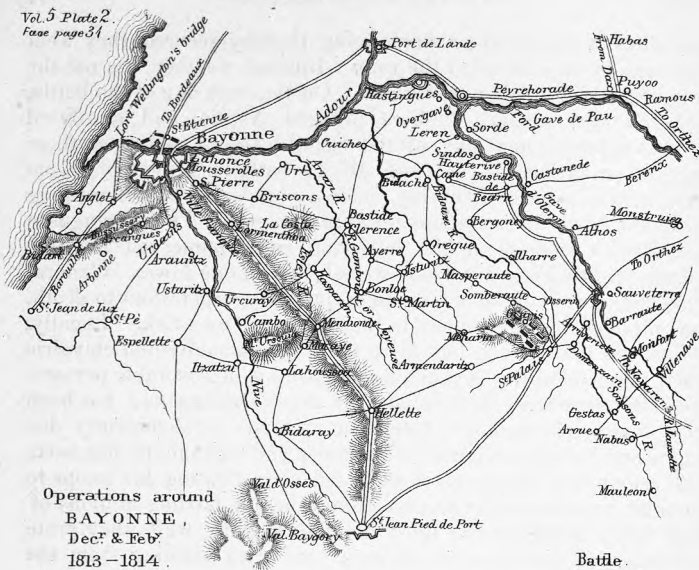
keep his troops together, and restore their confidence, while he confined the allies to a small sterile district of France, between the river and the sea, and rendered their situation very uneasy during the winter, if they did not retire. However, he soon modified this plan. The works of the Bayonne camp were not complete, and his presence was necessary to urge their progress; the camp on the Ursouia mountain had been neglected, contrary to orders; the bridge-head at Cambo had been only commenced on the right bank, and though complete on the left bank, had a bad trace: moreover, the Nive in dry weather proved fordable at Ustaritz, below Cambo, and at many places above that point. Remaining, therefore, at Bayonne himself, with six divisions and Villatte's reserve, he sent D'Erlon with three divisions to reinforce Foy at Cambo.

Yet neither D'Erlon's divisions nor Soult's whole army would have stopped Wellington, if other circumstances had permitted him to act; for the hardships and privations of the mountains had improved the quality of his troops. Fine air and the absence of drink had confirmed their health, while strict discipline and their own eagerness to enter the fair plains of France spread out before them, had excited their military qualities in a wonderful degree. Danger was their sport; and their experienced general, in the vigor of life, was equally impatient for action. Neither the works of the Bayonne camp, nor the barrier of the Nive, could have long withstood the progress of such a fiery host; and if Wellington could have let their strength and fury loose in the first days succeeding the battle, France would have felt his conquering footsteps to her centre. But the country at the foot of the Pyrenees is a deep clay, impassable after rain, except by the royal road near the coast, or that of St. Jean Pied de Port, both of which were in the power of the French. On the bye-roads, the infantry sunk to the mid-leg, the cavalry above the horses' knees, and even to the saddle-girths in some places: the artillery could not move at all. Rain commenced on the 11th, and the mist in the early part of the 12th gave Soult time to regain his camp and secure the high road to St. Jean Pied de Port; hence his troops easily gained their proper posts on the Nive, while his adversary, fixed in the swamps, could only make the ineffectual demonstration at Ustaritz and Cambo.

Wellington, uneasy for his right flank while the French commanded the Cambo passage, directed Hill to menace it again on the 16th. Foy had received orders to preserve the bridge-head on the right bank in any circumstances, but he was permitted to abandon the work on the left bank, in the event of a general attack; however, at Hill's approach, the officer in command destroyed all the entrenchments and the bridge itself; thus doing

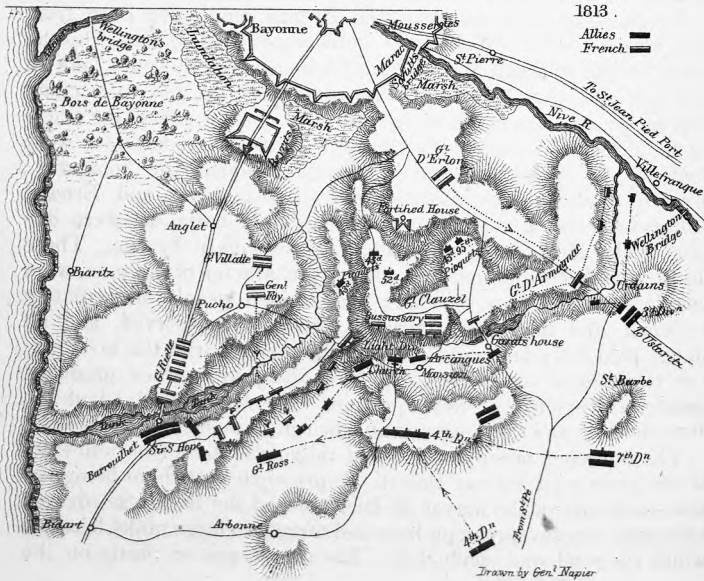






Battle  
10th Decr  
1813.

Allies      
French   



Drawn by Genl Napier

the allies' work, for their flank being thereby secured, they went into cantonments to avoid the rain. But bad weather was not the only obstacle to further operations. On the very day of the battle, Freyre's and Longa's soldiers pillaged Ascaïn, and murdered several persons; next day, all the Spanish troops continued these excesses in various places; and Mina's battalions, some of whom were also in a state of mutiny, made a plundering and murdering incursion from the mountains towards Hellette. The Portuguese and British soldiers of the left wing had commenced the like outrages: two French persons were killed in one town. General Pakenham, arriving at the moment, put the perpetrators to death, thus nipping this wickedness in the bud at his own risk. Legally, he had not that power, but his generosity, humanity and chivalric spirit, then and always excited the admiration of honorable persons. He fell afterwards in command at New Orleans, and has been most foully traduced by American writers. Pre-eminently distinguished for detestation of inhumanity and outrage, he has been, with astounding falsehood, represented as instigating his troops to the most infamous excesses; but from a people holding millions of their fellow-beings in the most horrible slavery, while they prate and vaunt of liberty, until all men turn with loathing from the sickening folly, what can be expected?

Terrified by these excesses, the French people fled even from the larger towns. Wellington quickly relieved them. On the 12th, he put to death all the Spanish marauders he could take in the act, and then, although expecting a battle, he, with many reproaches, and despite of their leaders' discontent, forced the whole to withdraw into their own country. Giron's Andalusians were sent to the Bastan, where O'Donnel resumed the command; Freyre's Gallicians went to the district between Irun and Ernani, Longa over the Ebro; Mina's insubordinate battalions were disarmed, and Morillo only was suffered to remain in France. These decisive proceedings, marking the lofty character of the man, were not less politic than resolute; the French people immediately returned, and finding the strictest discipline preserved, and all things paid for, adopted an amicable intercourse with the invaders; but the loss of so many troops and the bad weather produced momentary inactivity; head-quarters were suddenly fixed at St. Jean de Luz, and the troops established in permanent cantonments.

The left wing, occupying a broad ridge, was placed on both sides of the great road beyond Bidart, the principal post there being the mansion-house of the mayor of Biaritz; and the front was covered by a small stream spreading here and there into large tanks between which the road was conducted. The centre, posted partly on the

continuation of this ridge in front of Arcangues, partly on the hill of San Barbe, extended by Arrauntz to Ustaritz. The right was thrown back to face D'Erlon's position, and stretched by Cambo to Itzassu. From this position, which had about six miles of front, and eight miles of flank, strong piquets were pushed forwards, and the infantry occupied all the villages and towns behind, as far back as Espelette, Suraide, Ainhoa, San Pé, Sarre, and Ascain. One regiment of Vandeleur's cavalry remained on the left, the remainder were sent to Andaya and Urogne; Victor Alten's horsemen were about San Pé; and the heavy cavalry remained in Spain.

The establishing of the advanced posts produced several skirmishes. On the 18th, the Generals Wilson and Vandeleur were wounded. On the same day, Beresford drove the French from the bridge of Urdains, and maintained his acquisition next day against a counter attack. A more serious action had place the 23d, in front of Arcangues. This village, held by the piquets of the light division, was two or three miles in front of Arbonne, where the nearest support was cantoned. It stood in the centre of a crescent-shaped ridge, and the sentries of both armies were so close, that the reliefs and patrols actually passed each other in their rounds; a surprise was inevitable, if it suited either side to attempt it. Wellington visited the post, and the field-officer on duty made known to him its disadvantages, and the means of remedying them by taking entire possession of the village, pushing piquets along the horns of the crescent, and establishing a chain of posts across the valley between them. He appeared satisfied with this project, and two days afterwards, the forty-third and some of the riflemen were employed to effect it, the greatest part of the division being brought up in support. The French, after a few shots, abandoned Arcangues, Bussussary, and both horns of the crescent, retiring to a large fortified house situated at the mouth of the valley. The matter was thus executed with the loss of only five men wounded, and the action should have ceased; but the piquets of the forty-third suddenly received orders to attack the fortified house, and columns of support were shown at several points of the semicircle; the French, conceiving they were to be seriously assailed, then reinforced their post; a sharp fight ensued, and the piquets, finally withdrawn to the ground they had originally gained, and beyond which they should never have been pushed, lost eighty-eight men and officers, of which eighty were of the forty-third.

Wellington, finding that the contracted, clayey country he occupied paralyzed all his artillery and his cavalry, that is to say, a hundred guns and nine thousand horsemen, became anxious to pass the Nive; but the rain continued to baffle him, and meanwhile

Mina, descending again from the Alduides to plunder Baygorry, was beaten by the national guards of that valley.\* However, early in December the weather amended, forty or fifty pieces of artillery were brought up, and other preparations made to surprise or force the passage of the Nive at Cambo and Ustaritz; and as this operation led to sanguinary battles, it is fitting to describe the exact position of the French.

Bayonne, being situated at the confluence of the Nive and the Adour rivers, commanded the passage of both. It was a weak fortress, but derived importance from its position and entrenched camp, which could not be easily attacked in front, wherefore Soult kept only six divisions there. His right, composed of Reille's two divisions and Villatte's reserve, touched on the lower Adour, where there was a flotilla of gun-boats; it was covered by a swamp and artificial inundation, through which the royal road led to St. Jean de Luz, and the advanced posts, well entrenched, were pushed along that causeway beyond Anglet. His left, under Clausel, composed of three divisions, extended from Anglet to the Nive; it was covered partly by the swamp, partly by the fortified house assailed by the light division the 23d, partly by an inundation spreading below Urdains towards the Nive. Thus entrenched, the fortified outposts may be called the front of battle, the entrenched camp the second line, Bayonne the citadel. The country in front, a deep clay soil, was covered with small woods and farm-houses, and very difficult to move in.

Beyond the Nive, an entrenched camp, stretching from that river to the upper Adour, was called the front of Mousserolles. This camp was held by D'Erlon with four divisions; but his troops were extended up the right of the Nive to Ustaritz, under D'Armagnac, and from thence to Cambo, under Foy; while in person he occupied a range of heights two miles in front of the camp, having his right at Villefranque on the Nive, his left at old Moguerre near the Adour. General Paris also came down from St. Jean Pied de Port to Lahousoa, close under the Ursouia mountain, where he was in connexion with Foy's left by the great road.

The Nive, the Adour, and the Gave de Pau which falls into the Adour many miles above Bayonne, were all navigable; the first as far as Ustaritz, the second to Dax, the third to Peyrehorade, and the large magazines were collected at the two latter places. The French army was however fed with difficulty, and to restrain it from the country beyond the Nive, to intercept communication with St. Jean Pied de Port, to bring the cavalry into activity, and to obtain secret intelligence from the interior, were Wellington's

\* Original Morning States, MSS.

inducements to force a passage over the Nive. Yet to place the troops on both sides of a navigable river, where the communication, bad at all times, was subject to entire interruption from rain—to do this in face of an army possessing short communications, good roads, and entrenched camps for retreat, was a delicate and dangerous operation. Orders were however issued for forcing the passage on the 9th.\* On that day, Hope and Charles Alten, having the first, fifth and light divisions, the unattached brigades of infantry, Vandeleur's cavalry and twelve guns, in all twenty-four thousand combatants, were to drive back all the French advanced posts between the Nive and the sea. This was partly to examine the course of the lower Adour with a view to subsequent operations; principally to make Soult discover his dispositions on that side, and to keep his troops in check while Beresford and Hill crossed the Nive. To support this double operation, the fourth and seventh divisions were secretly brought up from Ascain and Espelette on the 8th; the latter to the hill of St. Barbe, from whence it detached one brigade to relieve the posts of the third division. There remained the second, third and sixth divisions, Hamilton's Portuguese, and Morillo's Spaniards for the passage. Beresford, leading the third and sixth, six guns, and a squadron of cavalry, was to cross at Ustaritz with pontoons; Hill, having the second division, Hamilton's Portuguese, Vivian's and Victor Alten's cavalry and fourteen guns, was to ford the river at Cambo and Larressore, both generals were then to repair the bridges at those points with materials prepared beforehand. To cover Hill's movement on the right and protect the valley of the Nive from Paris, who might from Lahousoa penetrate to the rear of the army during the operations, Morillo was to cross\* at Itzassu.

#### PASSAGE AND BATTLES OF THE NIVE.

(Plans 1-3; pages 81-88.)

When the passage was commenced, Foy's troops were extended from Halzou, in front of Larressore, to the forts above Cambo, the Ursouia mountain being between his left and Paris, but D'Erlon remained on the heights of Moguerre. At Ustaritz, the double bridge was broken, but the connecting island was in the hands of the British, and Beresford laid his pontoons down on the hither stream. At daybreak, a beacon on the heights of Cambo gave the signal for attacking, and the troops, supported by a heavy cannonade, immediately forced the passage. The second bridge was then laid, and D'Armagnac was driven back by the sixth division; but the swampy nature of the country between the river and the

\* Original States, MSS.

high road retarded the allies' march, and gave him time to retreat with little loss. At the same time, Hill, covered by the fire of artillery, forced the passage in three columns above and below Cambo, with slight resistance; yet the fords were so deep, that several horsemen were drowned, and the French were also strongly posted, especially at Halzou, where there was a deep mill-race to cross as well as the river.

Foy, seeing by the direction of Beresford's fire, that the retreat was endangered, retired hastily with his left, leaving his right wing under General Berlier at Halzou without orders; hence, when General Pringle attacked the latter from Larressore, the sixth division had reached the high road between Foy and Berlier; the latter only escaped by cross roads towards Hasparen, and did not rejoin his division until two o'clock in the afternoon. Morillo crossed at Itzassu, and Paris retired to Hellette, where he was joined by a regiment of light cavalry belonging to Pierre Soult, who was then on the Bidouse river; Morillo followed him, and in one village near Hellette his troops murdered fifteen peasants, amongst them several women and children.

When Hill had won the passage, he placed a brigade of infantry at Urcurray, to cover the bridge of Cambo and support his cavalry, which he despatched to scour the roads towards Lahoussou, St. Jean Pied de Port, and Hasparen, and to observe Paris and Pierre Soult. With the rest of his troops, he marched to the heights of Lormenthoa, facing Moguerre and Villefranque, and was there joined by the sixth division, the third remaining to cover the bridge of Ustaritz. It was now one o'clock, and Soult, coming hastily from Bayonne, approved of D'Erlon's dispositions, and offered battle. D'Armagnac was in advance at Villefranque, and a cannonade and skirmish ensued along the front, but no general attack was made, because the deep roads had retarded the rear of Hill's columns. Nevertheless, the Portuguese of the sixth division drove D'Armagnac with sharp fighting, and after one repulse, out of Villefranque, and a brigade of the second division was then established in advance, to connect Hill with the troops in Villefranque. Thus, three divisions of infantry, wanting the brigade left at Urcurray, hemmed up four French divisions; and as the latter, notwithstanding their superiority of numbers, made no advantage of the broken movements of the allies caused by the deep roads, the passage of the Nive may be judged a surprise.

Wellington had so far overreached his able adversary, yet he had not trusted to this uncertain chance alone. If the French masses had fallen upon the heads of his columns at Lormenthoa, while the rear was still laboring in the deep roads, they might