

“ 6thly. It gives France all the grace of having protected those Portuguese who have betrayed their sovereign, whilst it entails upon us the disgrace of exposing our allies to be attacked hereafter by a fleet which France has had the authority and means to protect. Will Spain or Europe believe that this was preceded by triumphs on our part? and will not France be convinced of the reverse ?

“ 7thly. It lastly appears in its general result to be a happy contrivance, by which England shall have made a mighty effort, for no other purpose than making a dependent state the protector of one of its enemies, whilst it becomes itself the instrument by which the other shall remove an army from a position in which *it is lost* to one in which it may recommence its operations with advantage.”

At length the provisioning and storing of the transports being complete, the French army began its embarkation. It took place in three divisions; the first being protected by the two last, as they again were covered by the British troops; and before the middle of September the whole had cleared the Tagus. The Russian fleet, likewise, in accordance with the arrangement entered into between Sir Charles Cotton and Admiral Siniavin, was taken possession of by the British navy; and the seamen being sent back to their own shores, the ships were forthwith removed to England. They

were conveyed thither, however, not as prizes, in the strict sense of that term, but rather as a deposit, the British government engaging to restore them within six months after a general pacification. Still it was a matter of no little moment to render them for the time innocuous ; and as Russia already began to manifest symptoms of a desire to break off her connexion with France, it would not, perhaps, have been productive of any additional benefit, had they been absolutely and entirely transferred to the English service.

CHAPTER VII.

Sir Hew Dalrymple is recalled, and Sir Arthur Wellesley returns to England on leave—Sir Harry Burrard resigns the command to Sir John Moore—Preparations for an advance into Spain—March through Alentejo—Villa Vicosa—March to Elvas—Elvas, Badajoz—Difference of character between the Spaniards and Portuguese—Colonel Lopez receives despatches from Castanos—Merida—Its antiquities—State of agriculture in its vicinity.

THE events which I have endeavoured to record in the last chapter were still in progress, when a variety of changes in the arrangement of the British army took place, some of which were of the greatest moment. In the first place, Sir Hew Dalrymple was recalled, and under circumstances which sufficiently implied that the country was not satisfied with the result of the two late victories. Sir Arthur Wellesley, likewise, to the sincere regret of every Englishman in Portugal, departed upon leave of absence; and his example

was followed by many other officers of all ranks. The command accordingly devolved upon Sir Harry Burrard; but to what use it would be turned, no one appeared to know. All at once our preparations and warlike declarations ceased: there was no longer the faintest whisper of a movement; and we gave ourselves up entirely, or at least we appeared to give ourselves up, to the amusements and dissipation of Lisbon.

A state of things such as this could not, however, be of long continuance. Rumours began gradually to spread themselves, that Sir Harry's sojourn with the army would be brief, and that, as soon as he saw fit to return to England, an active campaign would be opened. These rumours were not raised upon false grounds. Sir Harry's constitution was incapable of bearing up against the fatigues and privations of active service; he therefore applied for leave of absence, and obtained it; and the command then devolved upon one, whom, next to Sir Arthur Wellesley, the troops most respected and loved—Lieutenant-general Sir John Moore. It would be no easy matter to describe, either the satisfaction which all appeared to experience when these arrangements became known, or the state of bustle and activity which every department at once assumed. An advance into Spain was now openly talked of;

and everything seemed to imply that it would commence immediately,

I have stated, in one of the introductory chapters, that as soon as intelligence of Dupont's capture reached Madrid, Joseph made ready for a hasty abandonment of his new capital. He had enacted the part of royalty only two short days, when he found it necessary to lay his power aside, and to fall back from the stage on which he had begun to perform it. The whole of the detachments scattered through the northern and eastern provinces were called in. Garrisons were, indeed, thrown into some of the strong-holds, sufficiently numerous to man the works, and a post was here and there established, merely for the purpose of watching the Spaniards, and giving notice of their movements; but the main body, amounting in all to about forty-five or fifty thousand men, concentrated in Navarre and Biscay. Here a position was taken up, with the right resting upon St. Sebastian, the centre at Vittoria, and the left thrown back as far as Pampluna; and here they seemed disposed to await the arrival of those reinforcements, which in great numbers were stated to be moving through France.

Whilst the above was pretty accurately known to be the disposition of the enemy, we were given to understand that there were in arms, in the As-

turias and in Galicia, sixty thousand Spaniards under Blake and Romana. Two large armies, independently of this, were stated to have formed; one, in the immediate front of the French, the other upon their left flank; at the head of the last of which was Castanos. The very best spirit was said to prevail in all quarters of Spain; every Spaniard was, or was disposed to be, a soldier; there was therefore nothing to be apprehended by us, let us enter the country when we might. It was even asserted that, unless we made good haste, there would be nothing left for us to effect; since it seemed in the highest degree probable, that before we should be able to arrive at the scene of action, the French would be everywhere driven across the Pyrenees. Such were the cheering communications which poured in upon us, not only from the Spaniards themselves, but from some of our own functionaries; and it was with hopes naturally elated to the highest pitch that we looked forward to the prospect before us.

We were not left long in a state of uncertainty. On the 6th of October, General Moore received an official despatch, informing him that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to intrust him with the chief command of an army, intended to cooperate with the forces of Spain in the expulsion of the French from the Peninsula. The army in question was to consist of not less than forty

thousand men, namely, of thirty thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and artillery and engineers in proportion. Towards making up this force, the army in Portugal was to furnish twenty thousand men, including two regiments of cavalry, the 18th, and King's German regiment of hussars; whilst a corps of fifteen thousand men, under Lieutenant-general Sir David Baird, was to embark immediately at Falmouth for the harbour of Corunna. Sir John Moore was further informed that a scene of action had been already planned out for him in the north of Spain, though it was left to his own judgment to name a point of rendezvous on this side of it for the assembling of his troops. He was likewise expressly enjoined to move the cavalry by land; but his infantry and artillery he might either despatch by sea, or march across the country, as should to himself appear most expedient. Finally, he was instructed to pay to the feelings and prejudices of his allies every attention; to preserve the strictest discipline among his men; and to keep his divisions, as far as might be practicable, together, that they might act, at all times, in one body, and as a field army. It was added that, from the Spanish authorities and people, he might expect the most friendly reception, and the readiest compliance with his wishes; whilst, in case of any unlooked-for difficulties which it might be essen-

tial to remove, he was recommended to communicate directly both with the government at home, and with the English minister resident at the seat of the central junta.

Immediately on the receipt of this communication, Sir John Moore set himself actively and seriously to prepare for a full accomplishment of the wishes of his government. After mature deliberation, he determined that it would not be advisable to move any part of the army by sea, but that the whole, infantry and artillery as well as cavalry, should proceed by land. As, however, the roads through Portugal were represented to be extremely bad, and as no magazines or depots of provisions had been established, he resolved to advance, not by one route, but by three; and to unite his columns with that of Sir David Baird at Salamanca. But to move beyond the frontiers of Portugal, unprovided as we were with draft cattle, and having no depots of any kind, was impossible. Though, therefore, the troops were put in motion so early as the 13th, it was fully understood that the campaign would not be opened before November; and even then, from the aspect of things immediately about us, from the inexperience of our own commissariat, and the supineness of the Portuguese, it was extremely doubtful whether anything could be done to the purpose.

The hussar brigade, of which I was put in com-

mand, received instructions to assemble at Villa Vicosa, a town distant twenty-eight leagues from Lisbon, and consequently at no great distance from the frontier. We began our march for this purpose on the 18th. of October, and taking it by easy stages, arrived at our mustering place on the 24th. Here the information was communicated to us, that whenever the moment of further advance should arrive, the whole army was to proceed in four columns; one under the command of General Paget, by Elvas and Alcantara; one under Beresford, by Coimbra and Almeida; one under Frazer, by Abrantes and Almeida; and a fourth under Hope, by Elvas, Badajoz, Merida, Medellin, Truxillo, Almanza, Oropesa, and Talavera de la Reyna, towards Madrid. To the latter column, which was to consist chiefly of artillery, with four regiments of infantry to escort it, we were attached.

In passing through the Alentejo, nothing occurred to ourselves particularly deserving of record. We found the country, indeed, in a state of miserable destitution; fields unsown, and hamlets ruined and deserted; whilst it was not without great exertion, and a serious waste of time, that with all the previous arrangements which had been entered into, we found it practicable to procure sufficient food either for men or horses; but we met with no adventures by the way, nor be-

held any objects which had a peculiar claim upon our attention. With such spectacles constantly before the eye, it was impossible not to indulge in a few idle surmises, as to what must have been the fate of the French army, had it attempted to make good its retreat in this direction. The French are, unquestionably, a hardy and enduring race of men; they excel, moreover, in the art of discovering and bringing to account every morsel of nutritious matter which may lie in the direction of their movements; but it appeared as if all their ingenuity, and all their patience, would have failed in carrying them safely through the Alentejo. There was literally nothing left for them to consume. But the difficulty of procuring subsistence would not have been the only obstacle against which they must have contended. The very name of a Frenchman was, in that part of the country, a thing to be abhorred; the peasantry were all ready to fall upon their stragglers; whilst the Spanish army before Elvas, formidable at least in numbers, would have stood seriously in the way of troops disheartened by defeat, and broken down with fatigue and hunger. How sincerely we all regretted that the convention should have interfered to prevent a consummation so devoutly to be wished!

Though our marches had been short, and neither men nor horses seemed at all distressed on

their arrival, we had not occupied Villa Vicosá two days, when symptoms of dysentery began to show themselves amongst us. The weather, too, soon began to break, and the rain came down with such violence, as to induce an apprehension that the wet season had actually set in. These would not have been very gratifying occurrences at any moment; but at a moment like the present they were peculiarly distressing. Nothing, however, remained, except to make the best of them. To the sick every possible attention was paid; and as the disease proved, by good fortune, not to be violent of its kind, the labours of the medical officers were rewarded by their speedy convalescence. Nor did the weather continue, as we had begun to apprehend that it would, obstinately unpropitious. On the contrary, after two days of incessant rain, the clouds dispersed; and by the 3rd of November every appearance in the sky promised a long continuance of sunshine and drought.

The whole of Sir John Hope's corps having by this time assembled, and every other arrangement being complete, on the 5th of November we began our march towards Spain. At first, neither the aspect of the country, nor the manners of the natives, differed very materially from those which had met us in our way hither; for we were still a couple of days' march from the frontier, and the

Portuguese, more than perhaps any other people, carry their own peculiar manners to the extreme line of their country. But the close of our journey presented us with much both to interest and amuse. We halted on the 5th at Elvas; and as we came in at an early hour of the day, such as felt disposed were enabled to take an accurate survey of that highly-striking place.

The first object which here attracts the notice of a stranger, is a magnificent aqueduct, measuring in altitude no less than one thousand feet. It rests upon three or four arches, raised one above the other, and is composed entirely of a remarkably fine and polished stone. In length it measures about three miles, and it conveys all the water which is used in the place, to a cistern of such dimensions, as to be capable of containing a sufficient supply for the inhabitants during six months. Of the town itself, it may be sufficient to state that the streets are generally handsome,—the houses being all built with stone, and extremely neat in their appearance; but though surrounded by a wall, it is not a place of any great strength. It lies, indeed, at the foot of Fort La Lippe, and consequently at its mercy; and it is commanded by other heights, which overlook it from various quarters.

Of Fort La Lippe, it would be no easy task to convey to the mind of the reader an accurate no-

tion, unless some exact plan or drawing were submitted to him. It stands upon the very summit of a steep and commanding eminence, and overhangs the left of the town; the military occupation of which is thus rendered totally impracticable, unless the fort shall have been previously reduced. It appeared to me to be a chef-d'œuvre in the science of fortification; and to consist of five principal angles, or rather bastions, each covered by batteries formed into smaller bastions, in tiers, one above another, which gradually recede towards the centre of the fort. From the highest of these you command a view of the whole country for many miles round, and they all communicate with one another,—all, at least, which possess the same degree of elevation by strongly casemated passages. The fort is abundantly supplied with reservoirs for water; and furnaces for heating shot are erected in all the most convenient places; in a word, nothing appears to have been omitted which the knowledge of its founder could suggest as calculated to place it beyond the reach of insult.

The only height, within a moderate distance of the place, upon which, in case of a siege, it would be possible to construct a breaching battery, stands in a line almost directly opposite to the angle which faces the north. It was upon this hill that the Spaniards threw up works during the late investment, when they were so unwilling to permit

the carrying into execution of our convention ; and from it they contrived to throw a few shells into the fort. But little or no damage was done ; nothing, at least, in any degree likely to affect the issues of the siege. Yet, trifling as the damage was, the Portuguese had not taken the trouble to repair it : indeed, it was melancholy to see how completely the national indolence prevailed here. Everything was, as far as it could be, out of order ; and it seemed as if the weather alone would shortly lay in ruins a work, which, if there were no other or more powerful motives to preserve it, deserved to be kept up as a mere specimen of the art.

Having halted at Elvas during the night, we marched next morning soon after dawn ; and passing through a plain of considerable extent, crossed the Guadiana at Badajoz, the capital of Estremadura. This movement introduced us at once into Spain ; and the contrast which was instantly presented to us, both in personal appearance and in manners, between the people of the two nations, I shall not readily forget. Generally speaking, the natives of frontier districts partake almost as much of the character of one nation as of another ; the distinctions between them become, as it were, gradually blended, till they totally disappear. It is not so on the borders of Spain and Portugal. The peasant who cultivates his little field, or tends his flock on the right bank of the

Guadiana, is, in all his habits and notions, a different being from the peasant who pursues similar occupations on its left bank ; the first is a genuine Portuguese, the last a genuine Spaniard. Nor are they more alike to each other in their amities than in their manners. They cordially detest one another ; insomuch, that their common wrongs, and their common enmity to the French, were not sufficient, even at this time, to eradicate the feeling.

It was not, however, by the striking diversity of private character alone which subsisted between them, that we were made sensible, as soon as we had passed the Guadiana, that a new nation was before us. The Spaniards received us with a degree of indifference to which we had not hitherto been accustomed. They were certainly not uncivil ; they poured no execrations upon us, nor did they hoot or rudely annoy us ; but they gave themselves no trouble to evince to us, in any way, their satisfaction at our arrival. Whatever we required they gave us, in return for our money ; but as to enthusiasm, or a desire to anticipate our wants, there was not the shadow of an appearance of anything of the kind about them. How different all this from the poor Portuguese, who never failed to rend the air with their vivas, and were at all times full of promises and protestations, no matter how incapable they might be of fulfilling the one, or

authenticating the other! The truth is, that the Spaniard is a proud, independent, and grave personage; possessing many excellent qualities, but quite conscious of their existence, and not unapt to overrate them. On the present occasion, too, they seemed to be more than ordinarily self-important, in consequence of their late achievements; they were quick to take offence, even where none was intended, and not indisposed to provoke, or engage in broils with our soldiers. Not that any serious disturbance occurred during our stay; the discipline preserved in our own ranks was too good to permit it; but numberless little incidents were continually taking place, which served sufficiently to make us aware of the spirit which actuated the natives. Yet with all this, there was much about the air and manner of the Spaniards to deserve and command our regard. The Portuguese are a people that require rousing; they are indolent, lazy, and generally helpless: we may value these our faithful allies, and render them useful; but it is impossible highly to respect them. In the Spanish character, on the contrary, there is mixed up with a great deal of haughtiness, a sort of manly independence of spirit, which you cannot but admire, even though aware that it will render them by many degrees less favorable to your wishes than their neighbours.

Badajoz is a fine old town, situated on a lofty

eminence, which overhangs the Guadiana on its southern bank. The fortifications were then in a state of tolerable repair; and a tete-de-pont, and a fort on the opposite side of the river, gave indication that, in the wars between Spain and Portugal, it had been regarded as a place of some importance. During my sojourn here, I met an old acquaintance, in the person of Colonel Lopez, an officer who had been sent forward by the Spanish government, to assist in clearing the way for our entrance into the country; and who had delayed his journey back, that he might with his own eyes see that proper accommodations were furnished to the troops in their passage. Colonel Lopez had just received despatches from the army of General Castanos, which bore date the 30th of October. He declined submitting them for my perusal; but he acquainted me that Castanos had narrowly escaped being made prisoner when executing a recognizance into the disposition of the French corps. His head-quarters being at Logrono, he had ridden into Lodosa, where a Spanish light battalion was stationed; when the French, by a sudden movement across the Ebro, contrived to surround both him and his escort. Castanos himself escaped; but the battalion, after a brave resistance of two days, during which their ammunition became wholly exhausted, were obliged to surrender. The same officer

described the position of the French army, in the terms in which I have detailed it at the beginning of this chapter. He stated that it was Castanos's intention to cross the Ebro at Tudela, to form a junction with Palafox, and to penetrate into the rear of the enemy; whilst Blake's corps should hang upon their left, and observe Vittoria. These were highly interesting and gratifying communications; unhappily a very few days sufficed to bring proof that they rested upon no solid foundation.

From Badajoz the column departed on the 7th, reaching Talavera la Real that night; and on the following day it came into Merida. Between these two extreme points the country is almost entirely one continued plain; clear and open, and admirable for the operations of cavalry. The accommodations which we met with by the way were moreover such as we had no cause to complain of. In the different towns, all persons who happened to possess stables, freely threw them open, and took in both men and horses in numbers proportioned to the extent of these and of their dwellings; whilst the alcaldes had invariably men in readiness to conduct the soldiers to their quarters, and to collect, at convenient points, forage, bread, meat, and wine, ready for delivery. Everything was done with the most perfect regard to order and precision; and though the marches

were generally severe, varying from twenty-eight to thirty English miles per day, still, as the horses were well fed upon barley and straw, there appeared no reason to apprehend that they would not be brought into the field in as good condition as could be wished. And at Merida it may with truth be asserted, that the hussars were in no respect less efficient than when they first landed at Cascais.

Merida is a handsome old town, full of relics, not a few of which it owes to the skill and industry of the Romans. There are the remains of what must have been a splendid triumphal arch, an amphitheatre, several statues, columns, and old walls, all well worth the attention of the antiquary; and there is a bridge across the Guadiana, which the inhabitants allege to have been built by direction of the emperor Trajan. Nor is it the antiquary only who would find much to interest and amuse him here. The agriculturist might see in the province, generally, much which he has never seen before—ploughs at work, each of them drawn by a single ass or mule, and guided by a single hand; and yet, in spite of the lightness of the soil, crops produced, such as neither Kent nor Norfolk will exceed. Then again there is the breed of sheep, so justly celebrated for its wool, to be found here in perfection, with pigs of the most beautiful and perfect breed. There are no milch

cows here, goat's milk being alone in use, and that extremely scarce and difficult to be had; but the breed of draft cattle is remarkably fine. The beef, likewise, is excellent; but that which an Englishman enjoys above all the other productions of the country, is the bread. The poorest peasants here eat bread of the purest and whitest flour, which they generally twist up into a sort of ring, and knead and bake with the utmost care. It is really delicious, and it appeared doubly so to us, who for so many weeks back had eaten nothing but the sour and unwholesome loaves of Portugal.

CHAPTER VIII.

Advance towards Madrid—Rumours of Blake's defeat—Arrival at Naval-carnero—Madrid; the state of public feeling there—Want of énérgy in the Spanish government, exhausted state of the treasury, and miserable plight of the armies—Movement of General Hope's corps upon Salamanca—Fears lest it should be cut off—Causes of them—Overthrow of the Spanish armies, commanded by Blake, Belvedere, and Castanos—A French corps at Valladolid—Skirmish at Amvola—Rumour of General Baird's retreat—Reflections on the conduct of the war.

HAVING passed the night in Merida, with very considerable comfort to ourselves, we prepared to renew our journey on the following morning. Previous to our setting out, however, two pieces of intelligence reached us, neither of which had any tendency to increase the feeling of satisfaction that attended us on our arrival. In the first place, we were given to understand that, as we proceeded onwards, though we should find at least as good, if not a better, disposition among the people, the

fare and general accommodations furnished, would greatly deteriorate. The country was represented as naturally more sterile, and its means, scanty at the best, were said to be quite exhausted during the recent struggle. In the next place, and this was a piece of news much more alarming, a report got into circulation, that Blake had sustained a serious defeat in Biscay, and had retreated, no one knew whither, with the loss of three thousand men. The reinforcements, likewise, to the French army, of which we had heard something previous to our advance from Portugal, were stated to have arrived; and their numbers were estimated at sixty thousand infantry, and from five to seven thousand cavalry. All this was startling enough, but as yet there were no authentic sources to which it could be traced back; and as evils are usually exaggerated, we willingly believed that much exaggeration might have been employed on the present occasion. At all events, our course was a very simple one; we had only to follow our instructions, and move in the direction of Madrid.

In the expectations which we had been led to form respecting the reception and entertainment that awaited us, we were not disappointed. The people, though supine, were remarkably civil; whilst the treatment which we received from them, if in some respects less agreeable than that which we had hitherto experienced, was still as generous

as we had any reason to look for at their hands. They gave us freely whatever they themselves possessed, and we had no right to demand more. We accordingly pushed on in good order and in excellent spirits, and passing through Medellin, Miajadas, Truxillo, Jaraicejo, Almaraz, Naval-moral, Talavera del Reyno, and St. Ollalo, at each of which a night was spent, we reached, at last, a temporary halting place, in the town of Navalcarnero. As this place was distant from Madrid not more than twenty miles, I determined to quit the brigade for a couple of days, for the purpose of visiting that city; and it may not, perhaps, prove uninteresting to the reader if I lay before him a sketch of the condition, military and political, in which I found it.

The first person whom I made it my business to see was Lord William Bentinck, at that time officially resident in Madrid, and in attendance upon the supreme government. I found him disconcerted, in no ordinary degree, at the manner in which all things were conducted. The junta, it appeared, did nothing, or rather it was doing everything which Buonaparte could have desired. There was neither energy nor decision in the councils of the government—there was no money in the treasury—stores of every kind were wanting; and anarchy and misrule seemed to prevail in every department. Morla was at this time

secretary to the committee for the management of military affairs; and Morla was known to be an able, as he was then believed to be an honourable man; but the managing committee itself was made up of men, as ignorant as they were credulous. In their meetings there was abundance of cabal and party spirit, but neither talent nor information. Such were the accounts which Lord William gave of the Spaniards; whilst of our own situation he drew no more flattering picture. He was himself totally in the dark, and he believed that others were equally so, touching the amount and situation of the French army; he knew only that they were rapidly advancing, and in great force; but where they were now, or whither they might move hereafter, he was completely ignorant. So much, indeed, was he struck with the absence of all vigour in the conduct of the Spanish authorities, that he already appeared to regard the game as desperate. Our columns might, he conceived, effect their junction at Salamanca; it was even probable, from the accounts which had recently reached him, that they would; but it was by no means impossible that the enemy might succeed in throwing a strong corps in the way of that junction; for there were no Spaniards up in a state to oppose them.

These were certainly not the most acceptable communications which might have been made,

particularly to one who was already aware of the somewhat sombre temperament of his own leader. Sir John Moore was a most excellent but cautious man ; too much so perhaps to give his own abilities a free scope, or to do himself justice in the cause in which he had embarked : he had set out with the avowed determination of acting only in conjunction with the Spanish armies ; and he would not move at all till the whole of his force should be assembled. Now, if there could be one truth more self-evident than another in the existing state of affairs, it was this, that to look for any adequate support from the Spaniards till he should have more decidedly entered upon his great enterprise, was useless ; the question therefore was, would he, when at the head of thirty thousand British troops, including a brilliant, fresh, and most efficient cavalry, abstain from striking a blow ? There was too much reason to apprehend that he would ; though the army appeared to feel that now was the time to strike, or never. It is true that Buonaparte in person was stated to be either at Burgos or Vittoria, and that large masses, both of infantry and cavalry, were on their march to join him ; but the force immediately up was represented as not exceeding that under Sir John : why not endeavour to bring him to action ?

On the other hand, the junta appeared to be in

a state of the most pitiable alarm, lest Madrid should again fall into the hands of the enemy. They pestered General Moore with daily requests, that, in case of any reverse, he should fall back, not upon Portugal, or towards the north, but upon the capital; and they were particularly desirous that General Hope's corps might be detached altogether, and assist in the defence of the city. For they declared their determination to accept of no terms, and to make no submission to the invaders. Madrid, they affirmed, should be a second Saragoza; and if any judgment could be formed from the display of enthusiasm exhibited by the lower orders, it required but a moderate share of ability and good faith on the part of their chiefs to realise the boast.

I have said that the situation of affairs in general, as these at least were represented, demanded a decisive line of conduct from Sir John Moore; and that, upon every principle of warfare, a prompt commencement of offensive operations was required at his hands. Of the justice of this remark the reader will be the better able to judge, when I inform him, that upon our first line of operations, there were computed to be in arms, of Spanish and English troops, 116,000 infantry, and about 2700 cavalry. These were miserably scattered, it is true. There were the remains of Blake's corps at Reynosa, estimated at 20,000 men; General

Baird's corps of 12,000, including 1400 cavalry, was on its march from Astorga to Benevente; Moore himself had collected full 15,000 at Salamanca; and Hope's division, of five thousand men, was at the Escorial, already under orders to move upon Salamanca. There was also General St. Juan's corps, estimated at twenty thousand men, which occupied the passes of the Somosierra and Guadarama; whilst the armies of Arragon, commanded by Palafox, Omel, and Doyle, and that of Castanos united, could not amount to less than forty thousand. No doubt the latter force was far removed from any of the former, for its head-quarters were said to be at Saragoza, and its right towards the Pyrenees; it was likewise in the most imminent danger; for Blake being overthrown, the enemy seemed to be collecting all their strength, for the purpose of surrounding and overwhelming Castanos; yet the probabilities were, that a forward movement, executed with promptitude, might defeat that design; and there would be no very serious risk in advancing, at all events, to Valladolid. Nor was this the only circumstance which seemed to point out the propriety of adopting decisive measures. The French, though extremely formidable, were not as yet equal to the allies in point of numbers; their army, increased some time ago to eighty thousand men, had received an additional reinforcement of thirty

thousand only; the odds were therefore on our side. But it was not probable that we should long enjoy this superiority, as fresh troops were understood to be in progress from all parts of France towards the Spanish frontier.

But whilst thus arguing, let me not forget, in justice to the memory of a most excellent, intrepid, and able officer, to state one or two reasons why he should not rush, as it were headlong, into unseen dangers. His information, like that of the Supreme Junta itself, was most defective. Upon public and official reports, no confidence whatever could be placed; and from private sources of intelligence he seemed to be even carefully cut off. It was from his own officers alone, from Colonel Graham, Captain Whittingham, and others, whom he from time to time employed in collecting such facts as might fall in their way, that he received any communications on which he considered himself justified in relying; and these all united in representing the Spanish armies as not only half-armed, and otherwise wretchedly equipped, but inefficient also in respect of numbers. Corps put down by the juntas at twenty or thirty thousand men, proved, when inspected by these officers, to muster eight or ten; and of these eight or ten thousand, perhaps one-half, or nearly one-half, might be unprovided with muskets. Then, of the position of the enemy, no one knew anything. That they were

concentrating, seemed to be generally understood; and that their object was to overwhelm Castanos, most men apprehended; but no one could speak with confidence, because no one spoke on other grounds than those of common rumour. Nor was this all. Dissensions and quarrels were said to have arisen, both in the juntas and in the armies, at this most critical moment. Castanos was said to be harassed in his command by the presence of the commissioner Palafox; and to be on bad terms with those under him. Romana was true and able, but he was at a distance, and had his hands full; whilst Sir John Moore's own position, half-way between us and Baird, rendered any immediate movement extremely hazardous, either to the one flank or the other. That these circumstances carried great weight in the mind of our chief, his future proceedings proved; but it is now high time to resume this detail.

I have said that the central junta was extremely anxious that some British troops should be detached from the main army, for the express purpose of covering Madrid; and as General Hope's division chanced to be nearest at hand, the most urgent entreaties were pressed upon him, to come into this plan at his own discretion. It was strongly urged upon him, that were his corps to unite itself to that of General St. Juan, the passes of Somosierra and of the Guadarama would be