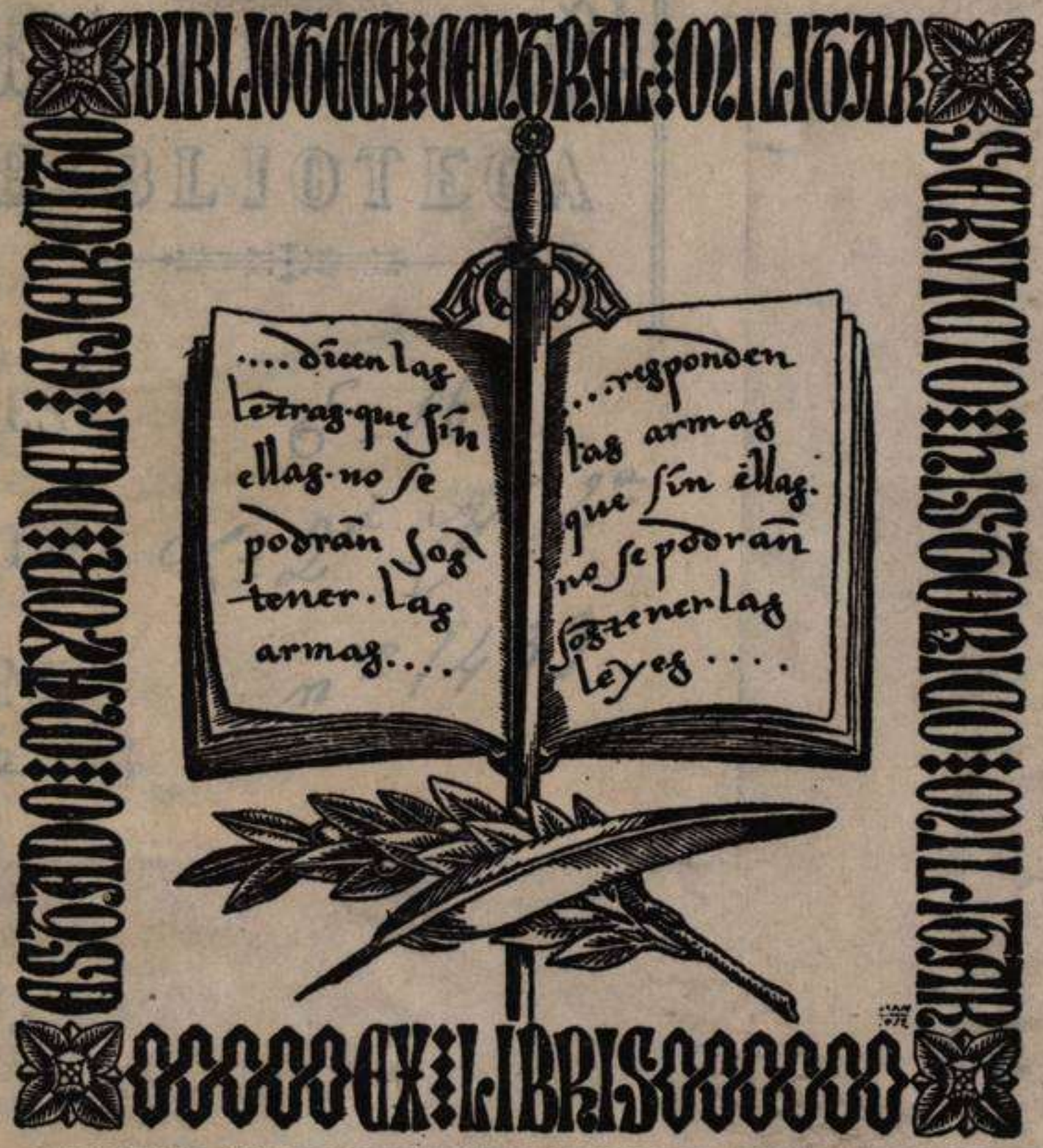

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A

NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

RETREAT

OF

THE BRITISH ARMY

From Burgos;

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

OF THE

CAMPAIGN OF 1812;

AND

Military Character

OF THE

DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

BY GEORGE FREDERICK BURROUGHS,
SURGEON, BRISTOL,
Late Assistant Surgeon of the Royal Dragoons.

Ut quimus, quando ut volumus non licet.
TERENCE.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD FITZROY SOMERSET,

&c. &c.

MY LORD,

I AM unacquainted with any individual to whom I can with greater propriety dedicate the following Narrative than to your Lordship; and this does not the less arise from the distinguished situation your

Lordship had the honour to hold for many years in the army commanded by the Duke of Wellington, than the opportunity offered, which I cheerfully embrace of returning your Lordship many thanks for past favours.

To commemorate the talents of individuals, and the services they have rendered their country, has at all times been considered a most pleasing employment; but in the present instance, I have to solicit your indulgence, from the knowledge that your Lordship is as desirous of

avoiding public notice, as you have been assiduous to deserve it. But the unceasing devotion and ardour with which your Lordship discharged the duties of an important office under many a severe campaign, united with a gentle urbanity of manners, and elevation of mind peculiarly its own, were ill calculated to suppress panegyric, while they attracted so much esteem.

These with many other records of your Lordship's worth are treasured up in the hearts of those brave soldiers, who never fought but con-

quered, and who after raising to themselves a monument "*ære perennius*," and crowning their respective leaders with never-fading laurels, *sheathed their swords on the territories of France*, amid the cheering acclamations of Peace.

I remain, my Lord,

With much Respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And very humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

OCTOBER, 1814.

INTRODUCTION.

The subject of the following pages has afforded much speculation; while some have condemned the motive which induced Lord Wellington to advance into a country beyond his means of maintaining, and laying himself open to the losses attending a retreat; others have thought it prudent to pass over in silence, this part of the campaign. To those who judge in the abstract of actions, merely by their immediate consequences, a retreat must appear tan-

tamount to defeat, and synonymous with disaster. The most fortunate and successful generals have occasionally met with reverses, and these as they have only tended to enhance the value of their victories, have never tarnished a well-acquired reputation. If there are no charms in the novelty, there are assuredly in the display of that general's talents, who, in rescuing an army from the greatest danger, places it in that proud situation, to retire commanding respect; upholding the honour of his country, in the ability of his retreat.

The biographer or historian, who shall blazon his pages with the noble exploits of the soldier, will feel an additional pleasure in tracing the steps of that illustrious warrior, who is the pride and glory of his own country, and the admiration of the age in which he lives. He will not fail to repre-

sent him sharing all the fatigues of the private soldier, and scarcely allowing himself that time for repose, which nature requires; blending with the most comprehensive genius the most spirited exertion, and while appearing to be absorbed in general conversation, revolving in his mind schemes for the liberation of the Peninsula, from the yoke of Foreign power. This was a point that occupied his attention in the greatest degree, and he partook too much of the British character, not to be affected by the loss the Peninsular cause sustained, in the death of the Marquis de Romana, which his Lordship exemplified in a grave and silent deportment, was not less his; but there was a majesty in his silence, that at once inspired awe and devotion. So little was this great general's time employed in private, that all his actions in bearing a faithful counterpart to the words of Cæsar, *veni,*

vidi, vici, would seem to have resulted from the energy of the moment. Whoever the task shall devolve upon to pen the military career of the Duke of Wellington, cannot fail to pourtray in the liveliest colours, the great coolness and intrepidity which this noble commander displayed during the battle, and the cheerfulness and animation always preceding it; nor in describing the unbounded confidence he inspired, will he forget the eagerness of the soldiers to catch every shade of his countenance, as they marched to the attack. In a short, but brilliant career of almost never-varying success, he united, by his abilities, two nations bearing the strongest antipathy and hatred to each other, to bury their animosities in oblivion, and join hand and heart to second his exertions, and effect their own independence. Even in the field, when organising their troops, and pointing out to them the

paths of glory, his mind was not less engaged in framing laws for the well-being of their governments. Always easy of access, complaints were never preferred without being instantly enquired into and redressed; and as he always rewarded merit, so he never forgot the exertions of others, modestly attributing that to the valour of his soldiers, what by the magnificence of the design he had himself atchieved. The boldness of his conception was admirably seconded by a rapidity of execution, so that under the most perilous circumstances, success generally followed what his happy genius had begun.

The staff of the army whose duty it was to carry his Lordship's orders into effect, was composed of officers of much zeal, and many of them of information; but as no British force had been employed on the

Continent for any considerable time since the era of the Duke of Marlborough, the military science was not far advanced, or well understood, and the genius of a commander being only elicited by necessity, and improved by opportunity, it was for Lord Wellington to rescue it from this state of insignificance, who, in the battle of Talavera, while he stamped his own fame, in displaying on that trying occasion, the most consummate ability, no less confounded the French army, than astonished our own. He could manœuvre his army with such accuracy, that the divisions pursuing different routes, would arrive at their destinations, or at the point of attack, at the very moment they were expected. A better proof in illustration, could not be given, than when Marshal Massena halted his army on the Sierra d'Estrella, at the town of Guarda, for though these mountains are so elevated,

that all the year round they are generally covered with snow, and the roads leading to them circuitous and bad, yet the different columns surmounted every difficulty and made their appearance on the summit at the same time with each other, which so intimidated the enemy, that he retired from the position without making the smallest resistance. Lord Wellington appeared to confide not less in the powers of the body, than in those of his mind, and as he seldom committed to others what he could perform himself, so during the time the troops were in winter-quarters, his Lordship accustomed himself to the most vigorous exercises, particularly that of hunting, not being at all discouraged by the chill blast of the climate, or ruggedness of the country. Among the other qualities of this great general's character, foresight was not the least conspicuous; he could anticipate the move-

ments of the enemy with the most wonderful precision; and as if aware of almost every exigency, seldom or ever required the opinions of others; but the splendour of his exploits, was exceeded by the generosity of his heart, and the attention shewn to the inhabitants of those countries devoted to war, justly acquired him the surname of "*The Good among the Brave!*"

The victories gained by Lord Wellington, happily for mankind, not only awakened the energies of those countries, whose interests he was defending, but stimulated the whole of Europe* to throw off the yoke of tyranny and oppression, which France had so long imposed.

* The fame of Lord Wellington had so engaged the attention of Europe, that I have heard it stated, the Emperor of Russia was desirous of getting his Lordship's opinion, as to the mode of warfare he should adopt, when Napoleon Buonaparte was about to invade his dominions.

The British army since the battle of Talavera in 1809, had not penetrated any considerable distance into Spain; indeed, the formidable armies the French maintained in that country for its complete subjugation, awakened every apprehension for the safety of Portugal. Aware of the great resources of France, of her numerous armies and military prowess, in turns directed against every state of Europe, Lord Wellington from the commencement of his assuming the chief command of the Anglo-Portuguese forces, had adopted every system of defence, which the government, circumstances, and nature of the country, afforded him. As it rarely happens that any power can be successfully defended by the exertions only of an Ally, it was necessary to call forth the energies of the people, and identify their interests with our own. The Portuguese forces in the year

1762, when under Count la Lippe, distinguished themselves in the war with Spain, had since sunk into the greatest degeneracy; and except some infirm artillery men in their garrisons, and a few infantry corps, whose effective strength was never known, (because two-thirds of the names on their muster-rolls were men who had deserted,) constituted the military power of Portugal. Ability, energy, and decision, the admirable and necessary qualities of an executive government, but more particularly to a country threatened by invasion, were equally essential to Portugal; and the appointment of Lord Wellington, and afterwards of Marshal Beresford, and the British envoy, (Sir Charles Stewart,) was hailed by the people, and by the army, as a sure presage of future success. By their exertions the army was recruited, and the order and discipline it soon observed, reflects great

credit on Sir William (now Lord) Beresford. The militias of the provinces were called out and put on garrison duty; and the Ordenanza,* kept in a state of activity.

Though the two Spanish fortresses, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, the one commanding the road by the province of Beira, into the north, the other by Alentejo, into

* The Ordenanza, (or armed peasants) seemed to be the engine of the government to enforce its decrees; they were not well-equipped, and for soldiers, their appearance was quite Quixotic. Upon a stick six or seven feet long, was fixed an old rusty bayonet, and this was the only badge of their dignified situation. These sticks, answered many purposes, with a needle fixed to the extremity, they were used for working the oxen cars; and I have never seen a peasant leave the threshold of his own cot to visit the next village, without arming himself with one of them, and in case of an assault, this was a weapon he managed most dexterously. An old *toga*, (or cloak) which probably had descended from his great grand-father, was usually thrown over and attached to his shoulders by strings, and to it was not unfrequently affixed, a pair of ill-fashioned boots, to wear in case of bad weather.

the south of Portugal, were in our possession; yet as long as the French influenced Spain, Portugal was insecure. Lord Wellington, therefore, aware how essential the safety of the capital is to that of the country, was displaying the most consummate foresight in converting into entrenched lines that chain of heights extending from Alhandra on the Tagus, to Torres Vedras on the Atlantic Ocean; all access to these heights was defended by strong redoubts, and every road leading to them "bristled with cannon." Provision was made in case the first line should be forced, to retire to the second, which ran in a parallel direction with the former, but from the nature of the ground, was by no means of equal strength. This defect was remedied by making a more extended line of *abbatis*, and multiplying the number of redoubts, so as to expose the enemy to cross fires. The third line was

of less strength than either, and would have been defended only while the embarkation of the troops in the Tagus could have been effected. As these fortifications necessarily demanded a great quantity of artillery, some of the cannon of Fort St. Julien, which it is said, contained one thousand pieces, was employed for the purpose; at the same time the whole of this stupendous undertaking was completed by entrenching the heights of Almada, opposite to Lisbon, so that the city was safe on that side from bombardment or attack; and at St. Julien, stairs were made that the army could embark at different spots, without the divisions interfering with one another.

The invasion of Portugal by Marshal Massena, forms a memorable part of the Campaign of 1810, and what with the great

army he commanded, the professional character of his generals with that of his own, enslaved Europe painfully thought success would have attended him.

Ciudad Rodrigo, after a gallant defence surrendered; then Almeida, by treachery; and though the enemy sustained a signal repulse on the Sierra de Busaco, they succeeded in turning the position, and obliging the Allied forces to retire on the fortified lines of Torres Vedras. The ability and foresight Lord Wellington had shewn in their formation, was now apparent to every one, for before this time many individuals had been imprudent enough to declare their opinions to the bewildered and distracted inhabitants, that our retreat was a "second Corunna business." Confidence, that inducement to exertion, was weakened, and the unfortunate Portuguese nation

considering we were as faithless as their cause appeared hopeless, abandoned themselves to despair. To add to the wretchedness of their situation, the people, by an order of government, given under the impression that the enemy should not receive any assistance from the country he was invading were obliged to leave their homes; to take what little property they could collect, and accompany our army to the lines. The consumption of provisions, in and about Lisbon, presently became so great, that famine threatened to exterminate those, whom poverty and despondency had already assailed. It was, however, reserved for the genius of a Wellington to rescue them from their sorrows. The laurels Massena had gained in Italy, were exchanged for the willow of Portugal. This general, after making many a *reconnoissance* of our lines, found himself unequal to force them, and retired

upon Santarem; the ground and situation rendering it strong, and easy of defence; but in addition to its strength, every means had been resorted to, to improve the position. Here Marshal Massena exhibited the greatest obstinacy—for whatever idea he might have had of reinforcements, or that Marshal Mortier, by possessing Badajos, and threatening the province of Alentejo, might divert the attention of Lord Wellington, yet it was clear, he had the mortification of seeing his army dwindling rapidly away, both from hunger and disease. His foraging parties too, were incessantly harrassed, and often cut off by the peasants, and more particularly by the militias, commanded by enterprising British officers. At length, dissention, that all to be dreaded spirit, broke out among his troops, and animosity among his generals. The Marquis Alorno,

a Portuguese nobleman and general, who had enlisted himself in the French service, and who from his influence and local knowledge of the country, ranked high in the confidence of Massena, was disgraced; and a little while afterwards, Marshal Ney, second in command, was sent in arrest to Paris. Then did the French army commence their retreat; marked with all that cruelty and savage ferocity inflicted upon the helpless peasants, that the most depraved imagination could exhibit; and Massena, in retracing those steps, which a few months before he vainly thought would lead to the consummation of his glory, by the conquest of Portugal, could not but feel considerable chagrin, when he found his army harrassed, and drove from place to place, without his being sufficiently enabled to put that abominable threat into execution, of making "Portugal a country not worth preserving."

Of an army, whose strength was considerably more than one hundred thousand men, from the time Marshal Massena invaded, until he retired from Portugal, scarcely fifty thousand were assembled on the plains of Fuentis de Honor, to raise the siege of Almeida; in which attempt, the enemy were frustrated, and the British forces maintained their positions covering that fortress.

As the allied forces increased in numbers, they began to act offensively, and between the enterprizing spirit of the Guerillas, and the menacing position of the British army in front of the Coa, the enemy found the greatest difficulty in throwing supplies into Ciudad Rodrigo, every convoy being escorted by a very large body of troops, in case of an attack. The governor too of that fortress, was surprised and taken

under its walls, by the Spanish leader Don Julian de Sanchez; and in the month of September, 1811, Marshal Marmont, who had succeeded Massena in the command of the army of Portugal, moved sixty thousand men over the Agueda, with a view to engage the allied army. Lord Wellington upon this, retired, and took up a position on the Coa, which the enemy not thinking it prudent to attack, quitted that part of the country, and retired to Salamanca.— In the latter end of December, the army broke up from their cantonments in Portugal, and marched to the investment of Ciudad Rodrigo—the weather was very cold, and the working of the trenches severe; yet, with such rapidity were the operations against the place advanced, that before Marmont could assemble his forces, and at a season when he least expected he should

require them, Rodrigo was carried by assault. This was no sooner atchieved, than the allied army moved over the Tagus, into the Alentejo, and sat down before Badajos; the seige and assault of which, will form a very interesting feature in the annals of history. x At the time the British army broke ground before the place, the rainy season had set in, and the ploughed lands were rendered so heavy, and the trenches so often deluged with water, that the working parties who entered, often returned without shoes, gaiters, or stockings. Still nothing could discourage the undaunted exertions and unwearied perseverance of the troops, and the commander of the forces set a noble example, in continuing at camp all the period of the siege, and occasionally displaying a profound knowledge of the engineer department; proofs of which he

had exhibited in the siege of Copenhagen. The weather from being cold and rainy, now became fine, but very warm; and the hands and faces of the gunners, from the smoke and powder, assumed the colour of the negro. After two large breaches had been made in the walls, a third was found necessary; and these were assaulted on the evening of the 6th of April, 1812; but notwithstanding the light and 4th divisions, made repeated efforts to establish themselves in the town, the governor (General Phillipon) had made every arrangement for a vigorous defence, that the most consummate ability and industry could suggest. The breaches were found to be impracticable, and the loss the British sustained at, and near them, was very considerable; a part of the 5th division, however, had succeeded in escalading and establishing themselves

on the walls; but what crowned the operations with triumph, was Lieut.-General Sir Thomas Picton, with the 3d division converting a false into a real attack, and escalading the walls of the citadel which commands the town;—word being brought the governor that a part of the 3d division had entered the castle, he first ordered a force to drive them out, but on being afterwards told that the whole had entered, he then said, "give up the town."—During the time the siege was going forward, Marmont entered, and ravaged the frontier of Portugal, north of the Tagus; at the same time Marshal Soult collected an army, and in conjunction with General Drouet, marched to the relief of Badajos, and pushed on their advanced guard to Santa Martha, in the neighbourhood of Albuera, on the very evening that Badajos was assaulted. Lieutenant-General

Sir Thomas Graham commanded the covering army, which was composed of the 1st, 6th, and 7th divisions, with a body of Spanish troops, and these were encamped about the position of Albuera, while Sir Rowland Hill, with his corps, was in communication to the east of Badajos. Marshal Soult, however, gained the information of the capture of the town, almost as soon as we did ourselves, and retired the same day on the road to Seville. As most of the inhabitants had quitted Badajos,* prior to the seige, by an order of the governor, there were comparatively but few who experienced all those miseries

* Some of the churches of this town were appropriated for the reception of the wounded, and a few days after the storming, a priest who for safety had concealed a bag of treasure, behind the Virgin Mary, very gravely entered the church, and making for the altar, laid hold of the property, and returned apparently very well satisfied at his great good fortune; leaving the poor wounded soldiers who were spectators lamenting and condemning their own.

and ill treatment from the military, that assaulted towns are commonly subject to. The soldiers on entering the place, discovered a quantity of French spirits, of which they drank freely, and in a state of intoxication proceeded to plunder the town. The wealth gained by one was handed to another, and he who had enriched himself in the morning, found himself often deprived of his coat and accoutrements at night. To put a stop to these excesses, the commander of the forces ordered the 5th division into the town, to inflict exemplary punishments; by which means, order was soon restored.

At the commencement of the month of May, Lord Wellington issued a general order, which required different regiments to take a quota of Spanish troops upon their strength, to receive pay;—this with the

ready equipment of the army, prepared us for the field. On the 19th of May, the army crossed the Agueda, and directed its march to Salamanca, which the enemy, after setting fire to their magazines, evacuated at our approach, retiring to the villages of San Morisco and Castiliano, distant about six miles eastward of the city, leaving a garrison in the forts they had built that commanded the passage of the bridge over the Tormes. The army forded the river at the village of Santa Martha, and the 6th division was detached to reduce the forts of Salamanca, while the remainder of the forces took up position on the heights of San Christoval de la Cuesta, to cover the city. The day had been cloudy, with occasional showers, when at its wane, the British columns approached the heights, which upon reaching, they deployed into two open lines, the cavalry, at the same

time, taking post in the rear. The enemy advanced from the villages, their cavalry covering some light artillery, which rapidly disgorged their fires upon our lines; while the retiring sun, breaking between the clouds, shed his soft rays around, and with the new equipment of our troops, and lustre of their arms, rendered the scene both grand and imposing.

Many of the inhabitants had left Salamanca* at our approach, and retired to their country seats; some accompanied the French army, and others shut themselves up altogether in their own houses.

* At this place in remonstrating with the mistress of the house, where I was billetted, upon her unkindness in refusing to let me have the use of her kitchen to cook my dinner, and telling her we came among them as friends, she informed me with a countenance of itself sufficiently expressive, she knew nothing of us, but for the French she entertained every *tender* feeling; and this arose from their living so long among them, and marrying into their families.

If we had here formed an estimate of the disposition of the people towards us, it would not have been very favourable, for although aware there was a great quantity of flour in the town, we found great difficulty in procuring bread. To be sure, our credit was somewhat involved, for part of Sir John Moore's forces had neglected to pay for supplies which they obtained here; and whenever the commissariat made application for provisions, the magistrates never failed to present them with a number of the checks or acknowledgements, given by that army; at the same time recommending that they should be taken up first.

The French maintained themselves in the villages of Morisco, and Castiliano for some days, situated so close to our lines, that we could plainly see their troops unroofing the houses, to procure

fire-wood. Various *reconnoissances** were made on both sides, but no disposition shewn to attack, and excepting a hill on the right of our line, of which we dispossessed the enemy, not a hostile shot was fired.

The reduction of the forts of Salamanca being effected, and Marshal Marmont having retired behind the Douro to concentrate his forces, the British army broke up from the Tormes, and marched in pursuit of the enemy, while Sir Rowland Hill made a diversion into Estremadura, driving General Drouet, who commanded a force of observation, before him. The French

* Marshal Marmont was particularly distinguished one morning. Mounted on an English horse, and in disguise; the Marshal unattended had advanced pretty close to our videttes, at whom he now and then discharged a pistol, as he paced his horse quickly to and fro. He was presently known, and three of the German Hussars were dispatched after him, who pursued him closely for some considerable distance, until he got into his own lines, and then he was traced into the village of Morisco, his head quarters.

having gained possession of the bridges over the Douro, and the fords being ascertained to be impassable, the British forces remained on the south bank of that river nearly a month, covering the Spanish army, under Gen. Castanos, who was at this time besieging Astorga, and though this place, in consequence of decay, had lost a considerable part of that strength it formerly possessed, yet from the want of the necessary means to reduce it, the besieged were enabled to make a very protracted resistance;—at length, it surrendered, and the Spanish army was united with our own.

About the middle of July, the French army having received large reinforcements, began to act on the offensive, and as our forces were distributed along the course of the Douro, the enemy, in order to impress

upon us the belief they were retreating, blew up the bridge at Toro, at night; at the same time that they crossed the river in those places, where they were least expected.

This *ruse de guerre*, which was intended to separate and cut off our divisions, did infinite credit to the ability of Marmont, but the object failed, and after a forced march by night, the army became concentrated near Alaejos, and directed its route to Canizal. At this latter place, the French began to press upon our rear, and attempted to gain possession of the village, which they had no sooner accomplished, than they were driven from it, by the 27th, and 40th regiments, at the point of the bayonet.* The army continued its march, and on the

* The weather at this time was so very warm and oppressive, that many of the men of these corps sunk lifeless on the road.

morning of the 21st of July, the whole of the allied forces was assembled, and encamped on the Tormes. The evening of the same day, suddenly became overcast, as preceding a tempest, while at a distance, the lengthened clouds of dust warned us of the enemy's approach. The thunder rolled over our heads while the columns marched to the position, and the whole firmament was irradiated by the uninterrupted course of the zig-zag lightning. The rain fell in torrents, and it being dark before the troops halted and piled their arms, the neighbouring woods roaring with the passing blast, were lighted up with the enemy's fires. The tempest continued;—and about midnight, a thunder stone having fallen among the 5th regiment of Dragoon Guards, the horses frightened, broke from their picquets, and galloped over the camp, trampling down the arms, attended with that crash,

as if armour had fallen from the clouds, and thus every where spreading dismay and confusion, added to the horrors of the scene. The warring of the elements, portended the approaching day, when the imperial eagles, those boasted emblems of tyranny, no longer invincible, were to grace the triumph of a victory, which half-affrighted Liberty was destined to atchieve.

July 22d. Soon as the morning dawned, the out-posts were engaged, and the enemy threw his skirmishers on all parts of our position, to feel our strength. Still every thing remained in uncertainty, and the heat of the day was insufferable. The columns of the enemy were in motion;—they manœuvred on all parts of our line, without risking an attack. At noon, the French were discovered cooking their din-

ners, and a dead silence reigned over the plains,—now and then interrupted by the report of a cannon fired at some straggling cavalry. The position we had chosen, was flanked on the right by two hills of a conical form; and on the left, by the river Tormes; about a league distant from the University of Salamanca. The further of these hills the French had possessed themselves of early in the morning, and succeeded in maintaining, notwithstanding the attempts of Major-General Pack, with some Portuguese troops, to dislodge them. It was not until half past two o'clock, P. M. that Marshal Marmont had determined on manœuvring on our right flank, which in consequence of his possessing the more distant of the Arapiles, was thrown back, *en potence*, towards Salamanca. His cavalry were all in motion on the road, and word being brought the commander

of the forces, that the enemy were determining their columns on our right, his Lordship mounted his horse, and saying to his attendants—" then Marmont's usual good judgment has forsaken him," rode off. The enemy's cavalry now began to make their appearance from behind the base of the hill, and had already considerably advanced, covering some artillery, which they suddenly planted on an eminence near the road, and commenced a lively fire upon our troops, as they defiled from the heights into the plains below. Their infantry columns advanced in quick pace, with the boldness and intrepidity of troops accustomed to conquer. The impatience of those of our own, who were not likely to be immediately engaged, was very conspicuous, and as our columns deployed into line, previous to their entering into action, it was scarcely to be restrained. The 3d

division, under the command of Lieutenant-General the Honourable Sir Edw. Pakenham, supported by the 14th Light Dragoons, and Portuguese cavalry, under General D'Urban, attacked the enemy's left flank, which was considerably extended towards Salamanca, while the 4th and 5th divisions attacked them in front. Our cavalry, in charging the crest of the height, upon which the enemy's left were formed, were at first repulsed, but being supported by Major Bull's troop of horse artillery, recharged, and in a few moments were considerably in the rear of their line. The 4th and 5th divisions were equally successful in driving the enemy from one height to another. General Pack, with a brigade of Portuguese, endeavoured to carry the Arapiles, on which the enemy having planted two pieces of cannon, very much annoyed our line, but the ground was so

steep and slippery, and the enemy so well defended the hill, that these troops were forced to retire with loss. The British cavalry, under Lieutenant-General Sir Stapleton Cotton, made a very successful charge against a column of the enemy, that had just formed itself into line; and in this, Major-General Le Marchant, at the head of the 5th Dragoon Guards, fell—covered with wounds;—his son at the same time fighting by his side. A division of the enemy's centre, supported by a large force of cavalry, made a successful stand against the 4th division, which was obliged to retire, and the 6th division being ordered up to its support, advanced amid a tremendous line fire, allowing the 4th division to pass between its files, and re-form in their rear. The 5th division, having now formed upon the left of the 6th, both charged the height where the enemy had established a consi-

derable battery. The charge was irresistible; the French cut the traces from the carriages, and rode off with the horses, leaving the artillery in our possession.

Marshal Marmont, in order to observe the action, had taken his post in the rear of one of the Arapiles, while from the other, distant about three hundred yards, the horse artillery commanded by Major Macdonald, were directing their fire at the enemy's troops. During the cannonade a shrapnell shell burst, wounding severely the French Marshal in two places, who in consequence was borne from the field.

The left and centre of the enemy's line gave way, the right continuing to keep its ground, being reinforced by those troops that had already been engaged. The 5th

division supported by the 3rd and 6th, advanced with cheers to the right of the French line formed in front of a wood, the access to which was interrupted by a deep and muddy ravine. The day was at its close, when this part of the contending forces became engaged, and to a considerable distance the flashes from some thousand muskets gave the whole wood the appearance of an illuminated grove. The successive peals which rung upon the ear, paralized every sense, and such was the fearful uncertainty of those who were not immediately engaged, which the darkness of the night contributed to heighten, that they dreaded even communicating their thoughts to one another. At length the right of the French army yielded to the bayonet, and the imperial eagles fell with their supporters. The slaughter now became general, and whole battalions threw down their arms

and implored for quarter. The cavalry supported by the light and 1st divisions,* continued in pursuit of the enemy, who in a state of the greatest disorder, proceeded to the Tormes, and crossed near Alba.

On the 23rd, the German heavy dragoons charged the enemy's rear guard, consisting of about fifteen hundred infantry, upon the heights of La Serna—their cavalry abandoning them by flight. The French surrendered, and when about to be disarmed, had the pusillanimity to discharge their pieces, upon our brave soldiers, which occasioned considerable loss—but in return they were sabred unmercifully. The army

* An Irish priest belonging to Salamanca, having staked with a Spaniard a considerable sum of money, that the British forces would be successful in the action, came among this division, inquiring very anxiously during the battle, how it was likely to terminate; pertinently observing, he could not bet against his country.

followed up its success, making a great number of prisoners, until the enemy effected their retreat over the Douro.

The result of the battle of Salamanca, must have involved the enemy in the loss of at least, twenty thousand men; and Marmont had moved his army with such rapidity, that some of the prisoners informed us, they had the day before the action, marched ten leagues.

Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton, with the 6th division, was stationed at Rueda, on the south bank of the Douro, to watch the movements of the remains of the army of Portugal, while the other part of the allied forces pursued their march to Madrid,—and met with no opposition until they arrived at Galapagas, a little village distant but a few miles from the capital,

when our cavalry and flying artillery became engaged with Joseph Buonaparte's forces, and in consequence of the bad conduct of a Portuguese regiment of cavalry, sustained some loss.

Buonaparte, with his authorities, left Madrid, and retired with his forces, consisting chiefly of some Juramentado* battalions to the Royal Palace of Aranjuez; while Sir Rowland Hill, who had marched through the province of Estremadura, and by Talavera de la Reyna, on the banks of the Tagus, formed at Madrid a junction with us. After the troops had reposed a few days at this place, the 1st, 5th, and 7th divisions, commenced their march northward, by Segovia, to Valladolid, leaving the other divisions with General Hill to

* Juramentado battallions, were composed of Spaniards who had taken the oath of allegiance to Joseph Buonaparte.

cover the capital. The 6th division joined us near Rueda, and these corps crossed the Douro near Valladolid, which town the French still occupied, and made a feint of resistance, by drawing up their forces on the hills in its vicinity. This position was turned by our columns, and the enemy abandoned it without firing a shot, commencing the same evening, a precipitate retreat to Burgos, from whence the Narrative begins.

A NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

The Regiment marched from Burgos, on the night of the 21st of October, 1812.—Confusion of the Baggage, &c. —Circumstances attending the Siege.—Departure of the Allied Forces from the position in advance of Burgos.

I Had scarcely reposed an hour in my tent, and it was eleven o'clock at night, when my servant came to inform me the regiment was ordered to march. I arose hastily and dressed myself, the thunders of the artillery of the castle vibrating in my ears. My tent was instantly struck, and the baggage thrown upon the mule. The night

was fine, the moon shone with that unvarying light an unclouded sky affords, and the neighbouring naked mountains,* gilded by her beams, materially added to the solemnity of the scene. The distant sounds of the artillery rattling on the roads, the buzzing murmurs of the passing soldiery, and the angry lightning from the cannon of the besieged castle, could not fail of inspiring sublimity even in the most vacant mind.

Having mounted my horse, I directed my way to Villa Toro, a very small and insignificant village, about two miles from Burgos, where the head-quarters of the army had been established during the siege. As the narrow road, (which from the late rains was rendered heavy) led through the mountains, and lay out of the range of the shot of the castle; the spare artillery and hospital waggons, commissariat mules, and baggage of the army, proceeded by it. The

* Upon these mountains, the Patriot army of Estremadura, under General Blake, was defeated by the French in 1808.

throng presently became so great, that the cargoes of the mules were overturned, and in proportion to the opposition, did the desire of pushing forward increase. Every thing was at a stand and in disorder. In one place were two or three sick soldiers bolstered up by their comrades' knapsacks lying on a bullock car, and surrounded by some less sick companions; in another, bags of biscuit trodden under feet, and casks of rum stove in:—here an artillery waggon had sunk axle-tree high in mud, the leading horses of which, having exhausted their strength to drag it out, were lying prostrate and panting in the road, so that it was with much difficulty I could proceed, and then only by striking out a path over the mountain.

Having entered Villa Toro, which presented one scene of bustle, I found the flying artillery of the Spanish army passing, and the streets so narrow and dirty, and so blocked up with beasts of burden of every sort, that the officers' servants, of head-quarters, were unable to load their

mules with baggage, and the commissaries were in a like situation with regard to their supplies. Some considerable time elapsed before I got clear of this village, and had scarcely done so, when I overtook one of the eighteen-pounders, which had been employed on the horn-work of Saint Michael against the castle of Burgos. An extraordinary number of horses were endeavouring to drag the carriage through the muddy ground, but the resistance offered was so great, that it was ordered to be spiked and left behind. After marching the distance of about three miles, the Estrado Real, or Royal Road, presented itself, leading from Valladolid to Bayonne.

The castle of Burgos* is mounted on a hill, on the north-east side of the town, and overlooks the market-place. It is of Moorish structure, and whatever decay it had suffered by the operations of time, had been repaired by the enemy.

* The castle of Burgos was blown up and destroyed by the enemy, upon the approach of the British army in the campaign of 1813.

A small convent lies near it, which the French had converted into a magazine and hospital. The castle was encompassed by two walls, which were mounted with cannon, besides some heavy pieces upon the castle itself. About three hundred yards to the south-east, there is a hill of somewhat greater altitude than that on which the castle stands, and upon this the enemy had constructed a horn-work. As this hill was a very desirable object in the prosecution of the siege, it was assaulted by the flank companies of the 1st division, on the evening of the 19th of September, and taken after an obstinate resistance, the enemy retiring into the castle.

The siege, during the space of a month, had been vigorously maintained by the 1st and 6th divisions of the army, under their respective officers, General Campbell, and Sir Henry Clinton, and though the weather was very unfavourable and inclement, and the labour of the trenches necessarily severe, yet the most amazing zeal and alacrity animated these troops. Several

assaults were made on the castle, with a view to the possession of the outer wall, and with various success. But in addition to the strength of the place, the besieged troops were unceasing in their exertions, both by day and night, and these exertions were admirably directed, through the intelligent zeal of the governor.* There was not a doubt however, but this place would have fallen, notwithstanding its commanding situation, and the bravery and ability with which it was defended. The insufficiency of our means, from having no regular battering train, and the rain that had deluged our trenches, had not dispirited, but increased our operations. The resources of our noble commander's mind never failed him, and no sooner had a breach been effected by our artillery in the wall, than another was almost immediately made by the progress of sapping. The troops upon gaining the wall, made preparations to

* This officer, Colonel Rey, commanded the fortress of San Sebastian, which fell to the army under Sir Thomas Graham, now Lord Lyndoch.

explode it, and the explosion paralysed the enemy, who precipitately retired from the first to the second wall, and the 24th regiment established itself in it.

It cannot be denied, but that the troops were disappointed both with regard to the strength of the castle, and the inadequacy of those means necessary for its early reduction. Yet disappointment follows us in every scene of life, and the asperity of its anguish was not a little heightened, when after nightly and incessant labour, batteries were thrown up, the embrasures of which were no sooner pointed, and the guns opened, than the heavy fire from the castle, levelled every thing with the ground, dismounting the guns, and destroying the artillery men.

For three days before the retreat commenced, the 1st and 6th divisions had marched two leagues in advance, and with the 5th and 7th, and General Castanos's army had taken

up a position to cover Burgos, which the enemy had threatened to relieve. The investment of the castle was consigned to the directions of Major-General Pack, with a brigade of English, and another of Portuguese troops, and the 2nd battalions of two weak regiments, the 24th and 58th of the 1st division. These, however, did little more than serve as covering parties, or as a guard to the trenches. As it was of consequence to conceal our movements from the governor, the troops, as usual, maintained their fire from the trenches, at the same time varying their situation, so as to impose upon the garrison a belief that the numbers before the place were undiminished; and for the same object, the tents and huts, reared of turf and boughs, which were in view of the castle, and belonged to the divisions that had marched, remained standing.

The Royal Road from Madrid to Bayonne, runs through Burgos, and from the situation of the castle, it was impossible the troops, with

safety could move on it; and accordingly the army retired on the south of the town, the baggage, &c. for the greater part proceeding by Villa Toro. The garrison appeared aware of our retreat, and kept up during the night, a heavy fire upon the straggling baggage, and all that came within the range of their guns.

LETTER II.

March of the Army to Vallefena.—The British Cavalry become engaged with the French, on the plains of Torquemada.

The moon went down at one o'clock, when I became involved in so much darkness, that I could scarcely discover the road. The night was cold, all martial sounds had ceased; and save the distant roar of the cannon of Burgos, a gloomy stillness hung around me. I had left behind my companions, who often beguiled the tediousness of a march, or relieved the oppression of care, by the narration of a facetious story, to listen to the complaints of the Portuguese boys, of whom there was a considerable number, employed as servants in our army. These, were lamenting the famished state of their own stomachs, as well as of those excel-

lent beasts of burden, the mules, whose unerring steps they were measuring by my side. As the word FOME,* pronounced with an emphasis, too well conveying the feelings which urged it, frequently reached my ears, I began to consider that I had but once participated in its calls, and then I found wild turnips and the hawthorn berry, not the most despicable substitute for food of better kind. From these reflections, I was, however, awakened by a restive mule, who, had precipitated its burden, and entangled its legs among the cords; it was fastened to others, and had disordered the economy of the baggage of each. Here, one limping from disease arrested my progress;—there another, labouring under an unmerciful load, threatened by hoarse sighs at every step, to give up the ghost.

I had now approached a village, and feeling an ague coming on, dismounted from my horse, at the door of a house which was open. On

* The word FOME, in Portuguese, signifies hunger.

entering, quantities of burnt straw lay on the floor, with some wood, which seemed recently to have supplied a fire. Having ordered my baggage to be unloaded, and a fire to be kindled, I wrapped myself up in my cloak, and laid down, prepared to encounter the paroxysm. This hovel, which from its exterior, looked as decent as any in the place, was entirely divested of every thing in the shape of furniture. The slender partitions which separated the upper rooms with the flooring, was removed, and only the central beam, that from its size had resisted every attempt, was remaining. Stores of all kinds and baggage continued to pass by, and the Portuguese soldiers were frequently entering my quarters to light their paper segars. As soon as break of day, I arose, and almost the first object that presented itself, was the 5th division and Spanish army, marching over the mountains which run northward through Old Castile, and which are a continuation of those forming the northern boundary to the kingdom of Leon.

A party of German hussars marching by, informed me the whole of the infantry had passed the skirts of the village, and that the cavalry would arrive presently. Having remounted, and marched about three miles, I overtook the 6th division, and proceeded with it to Celada del Camino, where the head-quarters of our second in command, the Honourable Sir Edward Paget, was established; and, at some little distance, the column was encamped. These troops had arrived here about two hours before, and were cooking their dinners. I had but just come to my regiment, when the route was announced. The column was soon under arms, and proceeded to Vallefena, which after several halts we did not reach until dark. Vallefena is a small village, distant eight leagues from Burgos; and is situated on the Pisuerga river, over which a good stone bridge is thrown. There is much inconvenience suffered in coming to a *bivouac* at night, particularly in the present instance, as it was upon vineyard grounds, so that at every step we sunk deep in the soft mound

surrounding the trunks of the vines, or else were thrown down by their long branches curling round our limbs. The tents were pitched, and the camp soon began to blaze with our fires. Our horses felt this night the want of straw; indeed, what little could be obtained, was always allotted to the cavalry and artillery horses; and where there was a sufficiency, it was issued to all who were entitled, by the general orders of the commander of the forces.

About half-past four o'clock on the morning of the 23d of October, an aid-du-camp of Sir Edward Paget's, came to our ground, and ordered the tents to be struck, and the baggage to be sent off; but it was six o'clock before the column was in motion and clear of the village. We continued our march, without interruption for several hours, along a very fine and level road, which seemed to lengthen, as we advanced. The 7th division, under the command of the Earl of Dalhousie, with the cavalry, formed the rear of the army; and as these troops ap-

proached the village of Torquemada, the French cavalry, chiefly composed of the Gendarmerie of Paris, began to display themselves. The Spanish army, under General Castanos, was retiring by Palencia, with the Spanish cavalry, under that meritorious officer, Don Julian de la Sanchez; but these cavalry were unequal, both from the size of their horses, and the paucity of their numbers compared to that of the enemy, either to make a charge, or to resist one. And the French having encountered and put them into disorder, they came flying upon the British cavalry, mixed with the enemy, in pursuit. Here the difference of language, with the similarity of the Spanish to the French uniform, created much confusion; and our light dragoons, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, (now Lord Combermere) having done every thing bravery could effect, were overpowered by numbers, and obliged to retire. At this critical moment, the 7th division, composed for the most part of Foreign soldiers, was halted, and formed a square. In this square, the commander of the forces with his staff, was observed: when the

enemy endeavouring to charge the square, was foiled in the attempt, and kept at a respectable distance afterwards.

In this rencontre, our loss was somewhat considerable, particularly of the 16th dragoons, whose lieutenant-colonel, (Pelly) being wounded, was taken prisoner.

The village in whose vicinity we had last encamped, contained a great quantity of new-made wine; and as many of the inhabitants had left their houses, our soldiers drank of it to excess. The effects of which, we found in this day's march, for it was with great difficulty the men who had thus indulged themselves could keep up with their regiments. This circumstance did not pass unobserved by General Paget, who, when the column halted for the evening, formed it into brigades, and addressed it. He began by expressing his regret, at the scene he had witnessed that day; which cast a severe reflection

on our character as soldiers, whose particular province it was to observe discipline. He professed himself anxious to further the comforts of the private, as of the officer, but it was more especially incumbent on the officer to look after his men; and Sir Edward concluded, by avowing his determination to inflict exemplary punishment, should a similar outrage occur. As he spoke, the evening breeze blew aside his cloak, and exposed the arm which had suffered amputation in the passage of the Douro, at Oporto, in 1809; and this, with the peculiar expression of his countenance, rendered the address doubly impressive.

LETTER III.

Route of the Army to Duenas.—Position taken up by the Allies in the neighbourhood of that place, and engagement with the Enemy.—March to Cabezon.

The army come to the relief of Burgos, was no other than the remains of that Marshal Marmont commanded at the battle of Salamanca; and which, besides the army of the North, under General Caffarelli, had received considerable reinforcements from France. The whole of this force constituted the army of Portugal, and may be estimated at forty, and certainly not less than thirty-five thousand men. Count Souham, a general who had distinguished himself at the time of the revolution, commanded; and it is by no means improbable, but this army acted in concert with that under Marshal Soult, when the Marshal had relinquished the siege of Cadiz, and

broken up his cantonments in the Southern provinces, for Madrid.

On the evening of the 22d of October, a division of French infantry, consisting of about ten thousand men, under the command of General Foy,* entered Burgos, and encamped in the neighbourhood; and the following day, their cavalry became engaged with ours, on the plains of Torquemada.

On the 24th, the army pursued its march to Duenas, preceded as usual, by the baggage, and commissariat supplies. Duenas is seven leagues from Vallefena, and lies on the west bank of the river Carrion, just where the Pisuerga empties itself. The column† after passing the bridge, encamped in the vicinity of this village. The ad-

* This General commanded the rear guard of the French army, after the battle of Salamanca, and by his exertions, the remains of that army were put in some degree of order.

† Wherever the word column is mentioned, it embraces only the 1st division, excepting where it is stated to the contrary.

jacent country is fine, and diversified with trees; for it must be mentioned, hitherto from Burgos, the land is barren; and there is a chain of hills running northward in the course of the river, to Palencia. The river Carrion itself is narrow, and fordable in some places for cavalry; and here and there, the branches of the willow, dangled in its stream.

Duenas is a small village, and has sustained much injury from the enemy. Indeed, it should be observed, that most of those towns and villages through which the high roads pass, were generally much damaged, and deserted by their inhabitants; but those on this road, particularly so. Whether the enemy retired, or received reinforcements from France, all marched by this northern route, and the halting places were consequently subject to that devastation, the soldiery are ever too prone to commit.

During the night, working parties were employed in mining the bridge, and making prepa-

rations to explode it. On the 25th, at day-break, the column fell in, and having waited some time for orders; the men piled their arms, and prepared to cook their provisions. About eight o'clock, the sun having dissipated the fog hanging over the plains, presented us with a view of some of the French forces pursuing the road we had marched the day before; and at twelve, the men having taken their dinners, we left our ground, and ascended those hills, which I have before mentioned, running northward to Palencia. Here we were joined by the 1st regiment of Foot Guards, who had disembarked at Corunna. On these hills the column halted, and shewed a front to the enemy, whose numbers appeared formidable. From the lightness of the soil, and the dark colour of their uniforms, they appeared to the eye like long black lines drawn on a piece of paper.

The position we had taken up, had the village of Duenas on the right, and the bridge of Anguarin del Palencia on the left, the Carrion

running in its front. Three roads led in parallel directions to the river; and as many bridges were constructed over it, which confronted the position. About two o'clock, P. M. our artillery began to announce the approach of the enemy; and shortly afterwards, a lively fire of musquetry was heard on the left, which continued some time. The enemy had endeavoured to force the bridge of Anguarin del Palencia; and already assembled such a force, that a part of the 5th division, under the orders of Major-General Barnes,* was obliged to abandon it; and the enemy succeeded in crossing the Carrion, at that place. At the same time, they made a brisk attack on the bridge of Villa Muriel, which was defended by part of General Castanos's army, and the 5th division, but were repulsed; and in this affair, the Spaniards were reported to have acquitted themselves well. Then mounting the *voltigeurs* behind their cavalry, they forded the river some distance below the bridge,

* Here this gallant General had his horse shot under him.

and formed themselves under cover of a wood. The artillery on our heights now began to open on them, and the execution of the Shrapnell shells soon became visible. The wood did not less feel the effects of that all-destructive shot, than those, to whom it offered a cover; and after the trees had been pretty well stripped of their branches, the enemy re-crossed the river, having sustained much loss. Their cavalry, however, on our right, succeeded in surprising a mining party of the 1st division, under Captain Ferguson, of the 58th regiment, who had been employed at the bridge of Tariago. This party had lain the train, and put every thing in order for the destruction of the bridge, and left it only a few moments before the enemy began to pass over; and while witnessing their approach, expecting every instant to see them blown in the air, they could not be more surprised than disappointed, at finding themselves made prisoners. At dark, we quitted the hills, and encamped the other side of the village,—the weather very cold.

On the morning of the 26th of October, after waiting some time for the passing of the Spanish army, the 1st division, which with the cavalry, this day formed the rear, pursued its route. As the country was advantageous for the employment of cavalry, and the enemy greatly out-numbering us in this species of force, we expected this day they would harass us much. Accordingly, before we marched, the men practised a little drill in forming squares with celerity, to repel the charge; but the enemy contented himself with narrowly observing and following our course.

After proceeding the distance of fourteen miles, we came to Cabezon, a village distant but six miles from Valladolid. It is situated on the eastern bank of the Carrion, over which river the army crossed. The bridge is of handsome structure, and composed of three arches. A chain of mountains of considerable altitude, run on the north-east course of the river; from which, there is an extensive prospect of the road

and plains leading to Torquemada. Six guns were planted on a rising ground,* directly after we had crossed the river, commanding the passage of the bridge. At the same time, fatigue parties were employed in cutting down trees, and forming *abatis* on the bridge, while others were occupied in mining the same.

The morning of the 27th was very foggy, and it was mid-day before it cleared up, when the whole French force was discovered encamped, about three miles distance. With a party of cavalry masking some light artillery, they approached the bridge, and several shots were exchanged on both sides; one of which, severely wounded Colonel Robe, of the artillery. They were suffered to post their videttes on the opposite side of the river, and their sentries near

* This rising ground was formed by a lime-stone rock, where the inhabitants had excavated granaries, for the reception of corn, wine, and oil. Sometimes there are two or three hundred in a rock, and the entrances into them are from eight to twelve feet in diameter, and from twelve to twenty feet deep.

them. Their officers were plainly seen walking to and fro upon the road, with segars in their mouths, talking to one another with all possible *nonchalance,* although within range of our cannon. The commander of the forces, from a mountain in the vicinity of Cabezon, had this day, a complete view of the strength of the French army.

LETTER IV.

The Enemy endeavoured to force the Bridges of Valladolid and Simancas.—Passage of the Army over the Douro.—Junction of General Hill.

The river in its course to Valladolid, loses the name of Carrion, and acquires that of the Douro, running in a tortuous course westward. The enemy, on the evening of the 27th, had detached a considerable force to their right, with a view to get possession of the bridge of Valladolid, and interpose themselves in our rear; but Lord Dalhousie had been dispatched with the 7th division of infantry and the cavalry, to defend this bridge, and guard the Douro from the enemy's passage. The Allied forces at Cabezon, therefore consisted of the 1st, 5th, and 6th divisions, with the Spanish army. The effective strength of each of these divisions, may

be estimated at six thousand rank and file, and the Spanish army at ten thousand men. To every division of infantry, excepting the 1st and 7th, a brigade of Portuguese troops was attached, which formed the centre of each.

On the 28th of October, about seven o'clock in the morning, a very heavy cannonade was heard in the direction of Valladolid, the spires of whose churches were rising to our view. The enemy, as was expected, had assaulted the bridge, and, at different times, but were constantly repulsed by a part of the 7th division, and in these attacks, the houses in the neighbourhood, suffered considerable injury. The enemy finding himself foiled, continued sending forces lower down the river to Simancas; the bridge of which, he endeavoured to carry. The post was maintained with great gallantry, by Colonel Halket's German brigade; who, after the enemy had made repeated assaults, as repeatedly unsuccessful, (though they brought up fresh troops at every assault) blew up the bridge.

The enemy having sent away powerful detachments to their right, the force in the neighbourhood of Cabezon, was considerably diminished; by which their principal object appeared to be directed against our communications with the rear. On the morning of the 29th, having blown up the bridge, and withdrawn the artillery, the army was again in motion, pursuing the road to Valladolid,* the country round

* There resides in a Convent in this city, a Scottish Priest, of the name of Cameron. This gentleman had acquired much respect among the inhabitants, not less from the propriety of his conduct, than the urbanity of his manners, and during the great number of years he had lived here, had amassed considerable property. While the army was employed in the siege of Burgos, hospitals had been opened at Valladolid; but at a distance up the country, where land carriage is scarce, all the equipments of an hospital could not be immediately supplied. Upon suggesting this circumstance to Dr. Cameron, he instantly exerted his influence with the chief people of the city, and got some Spanish hospitals delivered over to us, complete in every thing. I have likewise understood, this gentleman was accustomed to invite to his table, the British officers, prisoners of war, when on their way through this city to France. I think it but bare justice to the individual to mention these disinterested acts of generosity, as he was laying himself open to the severity and punishment of the enemy.

which is a perfect garden. The heights on the opposite side of the river were lined with the enemy's columns, and the coruscations of their arms in the rays of a meridian sun, had a very beautiful effect. Here a part of the baggage straggling into the city, became exposed to the enemy's shot.

After we had marched three leagues, the column arrived at the Ponte Douro, (where a narrow wooden bridge is thrown over the river) and halted a considerable time, to allow the baggage and commissariat mules to pass over. The throng was very great, and the passage so completely closed, that the commander of the forces with his staff, was obliged to wait some time before he could get over. His Lordship looked well, but there was evidently great anxiety expressed in his countenance.

Having passed the bridge, we encamped towards the close of the evening, in an olive wood, on the banks of the Douro; and began

to cook our provisions, and send our baggage animals for forage. The wood soon began to ring with the sturdy strokes of the axe, and the crackling blaze of the fires of the olive leaf illumined the camp. The lofty clamours of the Portuguese; the nasal murmurs of the Spaniards; mingled with the neighing of horses, the lowing of cows, and the braying of asses, could not fail of reminding one of the medley scenes and discordant sounds of Saint Bartholomew's fair.

October 30th.—A foggy morning with drizzling rain, which had continued during the greater part of the night. The army moved from its *bivouac*, at six o'clock. The road was rendered very heavy from the rain, and consequently incommoding to the troops. We continued our march on the south bank of the Douro; and about mid-day, when the fog began to clear up, perceived the French army marching in a parallel line with ourselves, the other

side of the river; and here and there were seen, parties of cavalry endeavouring to ford it. About four o'clock, P. M. the army approached the village of La Seca, and encamped in front of Torredesillas, upon vineyard grounds.

The bridge over the Douro at Torredesillas, was blown up at the approach of the enemy; and, notwithstanding the corps of Brunswick Oels had been directed to prevent their repairing it; the enemy by superior force had obliged them to abandon the post, and taken the advantage to plant their picquets on the south bank of that river.

On the 31st, we lay inactive. The 5th division that had gone round by Tudela to cross the Douro, joined us. The head-quarters were at Rueda, about a league distant, and the cavalry remained at La Seca.

We lay encamped on these grounds several days, waiting to effect a junction with Lieut.-

General Sir Rowland (now Lord) Hill, who had been left on the Tagus, south of Madrid, to cover the capital, as well as to observe the movements of Marshal Soult. It may be anticipated that the possession of Madrid, and the liberation of the northern provinces of Spain, from the presence of the enemy, had placed Soult in a perilous situation; and to extricate himself, he concentrated his forces, abandoned the siege of Cadiz, weakened all his garrisons, evacuated others, and marched for the Tagus. General Hill's corps occupied a position on that river, contiguous to Aranjuez; and the light, 3d, and 4th divisions, were posted in reserve, in the neighbourhood of Madrid.

About thirty miles to the north-west of Torredesillas, on the Douro, lies the town of Toro, the bridge of which had been destroyed some time previous to the battle of Salamanca; but the enemy, aware of the importance of the possession of any communication over this river, with a view to their immediate operations, had

very industriously employed a force to repair the bridge, and which they succeeded in doing, in a much shorter time than was reasonably expected. In the mean time, General Hill on the 30th of October, moved from his position on the Tagus, and directed his route by Penuranda to the Tormes, a river running northward to Salamanca; and on the 5th of November, the communication between both armies was effected.

LETTER V.

Account of the reception of the British Army at Madrid.—Departure of the same.—Conduct of Don Carlos de Espana.

THE possession of Madrid had created the most lively confidence in the people, and the enthusiasm which gladdened their hearts, affected our own. Never had a British army entered the capital before,* and, as we came as friends and protectors, the spontaneous ebullition of gratitude, surpassed all description. Every

* At least not since the year 1706, when the Earl of Galway and the Marquis de las Minas, with some British and Portuguese troops, entered Madrid, in the reign of Philip V.

kind of carriage was put in requisition, and filled with the inhabitants, left the capital early in the morning, to welcome our approach; while women respectably attired, who were washing their clothes on the banks of the Manzanares, left their employment to greet our arrival. The repeated acclamations of *Viva Senor Lordi*—*Viva los Inglezes*—*Viva Ferdinando Setimo*—resounded from every quarter, and the gratification that day afforded us, more than compensated for months of toil.

We now forgot our sorrows. Our sun-burnt countenances and tattered garments, were emblematic of our services in the Peninsula, whose united cause the British nation had so generously espoused, and her armies as gallantly defended. For these exertions, the people cheered us with their acclamations, and consoled us with their blessings. Even those whom infirmity and age prevented coming forward to testify their applause, re-told their rosaries with redoubled

fervour, as the shouts of the younger citizens filled the noon-day air. The bells of the different convents and churches, rung in unison with their feelings, and every past misery, was lost in present enjoyment. When this noble enthusiasm was at its height, I entered a bookseller's shop, and remarking to him, how very glad the people were to see us: "Aye," said he, "they are so glad, that there is not a man among us, who would not give his wife to your embraces." The Retiro, in which Joseph had left a garrison of seventeen hundred men, surrendered the day after our arrival, and the three following nights, Madrid was generally illuminated. Elegant velvet tapestries were suspended from the balconies of the handsome houses, and portraits of Ferdinand VII. and Charles IV. pretty generally exhibited. Amidst the gaiety which prevailed, it was lamentable to see so much poverty; it being no uncommon sight to witness of an evening, whole families at the gates of the rich men's houses, imploring for bread.

The gardens* belonging to the Palace, are situated opposite, on the west bank of the Manzares, and were open under the old government, for public promenade; but Joseph Buonaparte† had shut them up, and erected a wooden bridge over the river, contiguous to that built by Charles II. by which means he could go or retire from them with the greatest privacy. Whether this arose from any apprehension of danger to

* These gardens were laid out with much taste, but they had, with the government, so often changed masters, as to be much out of repair. The summer-houses were either furnished in the English or Chinese style, and numerous figures of the heathen deities, were placed on the banks of a meandring stream, whose course was richly diversified by the refulgent tints of gold and silver fish. Cascades, grottos, and hermitages, completed this little paradise.

† Joseph lived at Madrid in all the magnificence and luxury of an Eastern prince, and crowds of Frenchmen had assembled about him, to keep up the gaiety and spirit of the place. The Posadas or Inns, were generally kept by them, and the Palace, I understand, was so well furnished with women, that it wore the appearance of a seraglio. When we arrived, these people had taken their departure with their temporary Prince to Aranjuez.

his person, or from caprice, I cannot determine; but as a part of the army was there encamped, the wall built up in place of the gate was pulled down, and restraint being no longer imposed, immense numbers of well dressed people frequented them every evening.

The entrance of the Allied forces into Madrid, and surrender of the Retiro, had put us in possession of the principal arsenal of the French in Spain, and as it was well supplied with all kinds of stores, it afforded a very seasonable relief.

The departure of the troops from Madrid* was attended with that proportionate degree of sorrow, which joy at our entrance had excited, and it was truly a heart-rending scene to abandon to the unmerciful contributions of the enemy, a people who had shewn themselves so

* Previous to which, the walls of the Retiro were partly erased, and the artillery of the place rendered useless, by firing shot into each other.

decidedly friendly to the English nation. Don Carlos de la Espana, who had been appointed governor, during the temporary possession of the capital had perhaps too rigorously exercised his authority by putting in arrest and confinement, all those who were supposed to be in favour of the French, and confiscated their houses and property to the Cortes: and now, unfortunately, those in our own interest, fearful the French should enforce the same discipline upon them, left Madrid, and accompanied our army in considerable numbers.

In all these marches, the females as may be supposed, were the greatest sufferers, and if the cumbrous and fantastic dresses of the elder ladies prompted a smile, the loveliness and elegance of the young, elicited the warmest sympathy. The industrious, though too-much insulted ass, was the common beast of burden, and some of them carried upon their backs, what I would have willingly carried on my own—all that could interest by the union of youth, inno-

cence, and beauty. These unfortunate individuals, in the alleviation of whose distress, compassion had lost its balm, and hope its solace, had nothing but an ill-contrived parasol or umbrella, to protect them from the weather. If the sun shone, their faces were suffused with many a limpid drop, and exhaustion hung upon their lips;—did it rain, their gay attire like the feathers of birds, hung soddened and drooping to their delicate forms, and dejection sat upon their brows; while others in indifferent health, seated on a bullock car, were sobbing to the disagreeable squeaking of the greaseless wheels.* If you asked them where they were going? they said—they did not know, they were going with the English. Some, indeed, there were, who did not scruple in ascribing to us, the origin of their present miseries, and upbraided us with evils, which, even if we had the inclination to inflict, we could not have pre-

* The people entertain an idea that the noise made by the wheels of the car, stimulates the oxen to exertion, for which reason, they never grease them.

vented. However, as far as our circumstances and limited means would allow, every attention was paid them.

The lands about Segovia, had been drained of their supplies, during the advance of the army to Madrid, and afterwards by the march of those troops destined to act against Burgos; and though the country is very fruitful, nothing could satisfy the inordinate devastation of soldiers, who wasted more than they generally consumed. When Sir Rowland Hill, therefore commenced his retreat from the Tagus, with the divisions which I have before-mentioned, as posted in reserve, at the Escurial and neighbourhood of Madrid, they suffered much from want of provisions.

LETTER VI.

March of the Army to Salamanca.—Situation of the troops in the position taken up to cover that City.—The French attack Alba de Tormes.

The main body of the Army of Portugal having advanced to Zamora and Toro, on the Douro, leaving only a force of cavalry at Torredesillas; the Allied forces early on the morning of the 6th of November,* it being quite dark, moved from their ground, leaving the fires burning. We continued our route on the 7th, and encamped that evening upon the heights of

* Marshal Soult entered Madrid on the 1st of November, and passed the Guadarama mountains on the 2d, and on the 6th or 7th of the same month, the Army of Portugal formed a junction with that under Soult, in the vicinity of Rueda; which from the course of the river Douro, it was impossible for the British forces to prevent.

San Christoval de la Cuesta, distant about a league and a half from the University of Salamanca. These heights formed the left of the position the army took up, on the 22d of July, and the redoubts and parapets thrown up of earth, were yet standing. On the 8th, as the weather was becoming cold, those brigades lying contiguous to villages, were housed, the others remaining under canvass. The same day, General Hill crossed the Tormes at Alba,* leaving Major-General Howard's brigade of infantry in the 2d division, to garrison that town.

The Allied army was posted here in the following manner:—The light, 3d, and 4th di-

* The town of Alba is situated on the east bank of the Tormes. It is ancient, and from its appearance, has been a place of much more consideration, than at present. A strong, though somewhat dilapidated castle, lies contiguous to, and which commands the passage of the bridge over the Tormes. Among other things, Alba is famed for being the burial place of Santa Teresa, a beautiful woman, of exemplary piety, who lived towards the latter end of the 15th century, highly respected by all the princes of Europe, and supposed to have communion with heaven.

visions, under Sir Rowland Hill, occupied the ground between the Arapiles and the Tormes, which is intersected by forests, on the west bank of that river. The 2d division observed the fords of Encinas and Huerta, in the neighbourhood of Alba, while the British cavalry lay on the opposite banks of the Tormes, covering the town.

To the north-east of the river, the 1st, 5th, 6th, and 7th divisions, with the Spanish army, were encamped, under the orders of Sir Edward Paget. On the 9th, the enemy drove in the cavalry picquets of Major-General Long's brigade, and on the morning of the 10th, the whole of the cavalry were withdrawn to this side of the river. In the course of the day, distant explosions of artillery and musquetry informed us, some part of the army was engaged. The enemy, after making a *reconnoisance* in the morning, had about two o'clock, P. M. advanced fifteen squadrons of cavalry, six thousand infantry, and twenty pieces of cannon, close to

the walls of the town of Alba; they, however, made no impression on the troops posted there, and the attack was never renewed.

The French army was commanded by Joseph Buonaparte in person, and he had with him several Marshals and Generals, who had for some time past been employed in various parts of Spain. It will be seen by our having taken up the position in which the army had engaged and defeated Marshal Marmont, on the 22d of July,* that it was the determination of the Marquis of Wellington to engage the enemy now on the

* In this action, the French Generals of Division committed a fatal error, which led to the defeat and overthrow of their army. Marmont was so confident he should get possession of Salamanca, that the day before the battle, when at his table, he had allotted different parts of that city for the accommodation of certain corps. This confidence was conveyed to the Generals, who, in the security of success, led on their columns on the road to Salamanca (which runs on the right of the position of the Arapiles) without observing wheeling distances, and when attacked by the British, the French army was so confined, that not half their forces were able to shew front.

very same terms, notwithstanding their superiority in cavalry, artillery, and numbers.

From the 10th to the 13th, was passed in various *reconnoissances* of the fords of the Tormes, and of the position taken up by the Allied army, in front of that river.

On the morning of the 13th, distant and frequent discharges of cannon were heard, and the enemy appearing to have assembled all his forces on the east bank of the Tormes; at two o'clock, P. M. the 1st and 6th divisions of infantry that were stationed on the heights and neighbourhood of San Christoval, received the route to Salamanca, under the walls of which place, they encamped. From hence were plainly discovered the fires of General Hill's army, which were kindled for cooking. The wind blowing pretty strong, fanned the flames, and as the volumes of smoke ascended and darkened the atmosphere,

imposed on us the belief, he was engaged with the enemy; the supposition being heightened by occasional reports of cannon.

Salamanca is the first University in Spain. The city is handsome, and the streets are cleaner than is usually met with in most other towns. The churches and colleges have been much injured, and many of the convents only the walls standing: some of which, with the adjoining houses, the French had converted into forts; and during the time the British army was engaged in reducing them, the shot and shell which fell in all parts of the city, damaged considerably many houses and public buildings. The chief injury done to the city, however, was by the French troops, under the command of Marshal Massena, who had his head-quarters here some time previous to the invasion of Portugal. Every commodious building, no matter whether the seat of the Muses or of the Arts, was despoiled and converted into barracks.

Narracion
de la
Retirada
del ejercito Inglés desde Burgos

Serie de cartas

Con una ligera reseña como introduccion de la campaña de 1812

y

del caracter militar

del

Duque de Wellington

Por Jorge Federico Burroughs-
Cirujano, en Bristol. y antiguo
Cirujano de los Dragones Reales

I could not refrain from entering and bidding adieu to an University, which had exhibited much learning, and produced men of considerable eminence, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries;—but the more powerful inducement was that of replenishing my stock of provisions, which was reduced to a few hard pieces of biscuit; and these even when broken between the stones, continued to disappoint both my teeth and my appetite. On entering the Plaza, or Square, and going into a shop, my attention was arrested by two interesting females, sisters, who were lamenting with tears in their eyes, their unhappy situation. They said, "their friends were all about to leave the city with their property—for themselves, they knew not what to do, they were lost to the world." I was glad to return from this distressing sight, but it was only to witness others. Some individuals were engaged in removing their property,—others in assisting their sick relations upon cars,—while a few from the effects of stupor and fright, occasioned by the approach of the enemy, were carrying away the least valuable

part of their possessions. The distress of the nuns, who were too generally ill-treated by the French soldiery, was not the least conspicuous; in fluttering trepidation, they crowded at the grating of the convent windows, waving their white handkerchiefs to the British soldiers, who were passing, and bidding them farewell.

In this situation of things, it was easy to discover people, who were friendly to the enemy. A man who kept a Posada, or Inn, in the square, had very recently new painted his sign, in honour of the Allied cause—" *Tria Naçiones, junta in uno,*" comprehending the English, Spanish, and Portuguese kingdoms. Upon asking him, " what he would do with it by-and-by?" with an arch look and significant shrug, he replied, ' it answers my purpose very well, as it will now embrace France, Germany, and Spain."

LETTER VII.

The French cross the Tormes, and take position at Mozarbes.—The Marquis of Wellington makes a *reconnoissance*, —March of the 1st division to Tejada.—Route of the Army to Rozados.

It appeared to have been the wish of Joseph Buonaparte, to have endeavoured to force the right of our position, and intercept our communications with Ciudad Rodrigo. Had this movement been carried into execution with effect, the right of the Allied army, in all probability, would have been prevented from co-operating with the left; for in case of the defeat of the right flank, the left must have had to defile by the bridge of Salamanca, situated behind the right of the position, as all the fords over the Tormes, by the late rains, were rendered impassable for infantry:

and to *debouché* any force by the bridge, could not have been effected without a considerable lapse of time;—this was the only defect of the position. But as the right was difficult to approach, from our possessing the town of Alba de Tormes, which maintains the bridge over that river, Buonaparte, after a council of war, relinquished the attack;* and as numbers favoured all his manœuvres, determined to throw a force on our right flank, and threaten our communications with Ciudad Rodrigo. To effect which, on the night of the 13th of November, he moved sixteen thousand infantry, and a considerable body of cavalry over the Tormes, by three fords near Lucinas, two leagues above Alba.

This movement was no sooner made known, than very early on the morning of the 14th, the

* His Excellency the Commander of the Forces, seems to have been so confident the enemy would attack him, that the commissariat and hospital stores were left at Salamanca, until the very moment it was known they were avoiding a general engagement, and were detaching their forces to our rear.

1st and 6th divisions defiled from Salamanca, by the bridge, preceded by the flying artillery* of the Spanish army, and directed their march over stony and plowed grounds, until they approached the Arapiles,† where they halted and piled arms in columns of brigade.

In the mean time, the Marquis of Wellington, with that promptness of determination and rapidity of execution, which invariably marked his operations, moved with the 2d division, the cavalry and flying artillery, to engage that part of the enemy who had crossed the Tormes, and take up a position at Mozarbes. The wind blew strong; it rained fast, and murky fogs occasionally enveloped the ground, so as to render any object at an hundred yards distance, perfectly invisible. The French were, however, too

* This brigade of artillery was composed of small field-pieces, in excellent order, drawn by good mules; the harness simple, and made of ropes.

† The Arapiles were a chain of heights, terminating on our right in two conical hills.

strongly posted, and too numerous to be attacked, with any hope of success; and the commander of the forces confined himself to a cannonade of their cavalry, under which he reconnoitered their position.

The army began to cook their provisions, but without cheerfulness or alacrity; and I have sometimes observed orders to this purpose, followed by general indifference. For the soldier aware, if the route should come, while he is engaged in cooking, the most valuable and essential part of his meal, (the soup) will be thrown away, and he is not willing to sacrifice to chance the comforts of a dinner. Upon these occasions, our soldiers in their conversations with one another, frequently indulged their spleen, in loading the French with an immoderate share of invective, as if they had literally done them the greatest personal injury.

About mid-day, the bugles of the 1st division sounded the advance, and the column directed its

course to Aldea Tejada, to secure the passage for the troops over the Zunguen,* in case the movements of the enemy on our right flank, should have rendered it necessary for us to abandon Salamanca, or give up the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo.† This part of the country had been so exhausted of its supplies by the numerous and constant demands made by the troops passing on their way from Portugal to the army, that our horses felt the want of forage severely, and this, with the inclement weather, caused many to perish. The Spanish army whose commissariat was ill supplied from the poverty of the military chest, began to expend their ammunition by shooting the pigs, the property of the inhabitants, for sustenance; indeed, they kept up

* Zunguen, a small river, taking its rise at the village of Morilla, runs northward, and empties itself into the Tormes, west of Salamanca.

† A large depôt for the supply of the British army, was maintained here, besides the northern road from the province of Beira in Portugal to Spain, led over the river Agueda, through this city.

such a lively fire during the night, that we were apprehensive our picquets were warmly engaged. A proper example was made of some men the following day, who were caught so doing, by hanging them on trees, as the army passed.

On the morning of the 15th, the enemy were discovered fortifying their position at Mozarbes, and at the same time they were moving bodies of cavalry and infantry towards their left, and to our communications with Ciudad Rodrigo. It was obvious, therefore, as the Marquis of Wellington expressed himself "that the enemy intended to act upon our communications, and as they were too strong, and too strongly posted for me to think of attacking them, I determined to move upon Ciudad Rodrigo." In the evening, the troops lying contiguous to Alba, as well as those posted on the Arapiles, and in the neighbourhood of Salamanca were withdrawn, leaving only a small Spanish garrison in Alba, and destroying the bridge over the Tormes, at that town.

The army in columns, was now put in motion to retire, observing as well as the country would allow, parallel distances. The first column was commanded by Sir Rowland Hill, the centre by Sir Edward Paget, and the third consisted of the Spanish army, who in case of an action, would have formed a corps of reserve. Salamanca was thus abandoned; we left it behind on our right, and in the course of the day, passed the French forces at Mozarbes, on our left. We made roads for ourselves, for we did not observe or follow any; sometimes ascending hills upon stony and ploughed grounds—then descending into plains inundated with water, and intersected with swamps. We continued our march for about five leagues, and arrived at seven o'clock in the evening, (it being dark and raining fast) on the Vamusa;* and encamped near Rozados, under olive trees. This march was a very fatiguing one from the wretched state of the weather, and badness of the ground,

* Vamusa, a small river running into the Tormes.

and the soldiers were not a little dispirited on finding that no provision was to be issued out to them, as all the supplies had been forwarded to Ciudad Rodrigo. It must be mentioned that the British army always received three days' bread* in advance; and this stock was regularly kept up by daily issues from the commissary, except when the situation of affairs demanded for safety, as well as to prevent any impediment in the movements of the army, that the commissariat should be stationed at a distance in the rear. But the unthinking soldier, following the adage—"to-morrow will provide for itself;" not unfrequently devoured the three days' ration in one, disregarding if not forgetting, that the three days' issue in advance, were for days of trial.

* The usual ration of the army, was a pound of biscuit, a pound of meat, and a pint of wine; if there was not wine in store, a pint of spirits among three men was substituted.

LETTER VIII.

Route of the Army to San Munoz, near Tamames, and commencement of its privations.

On the 16th of November, the army continued its march, and the enemy followed with the whole of his cavalry, probably consisting of ten thousand, and a considerable body of light infantry. The weather was severe, and the ground so heavy, that the horses at every step sunk to the fetlock, and the men to their ancles. The former suffered much last evening, not having any provender; whilst the bark of trees, and sprigs of wild briar, afforded but an indifferent substitute: indeed, we felt for these invaluable animals, and well we might, for their existence was essentially necessary to our own. Their toils had lessened many of our fatigues, which

otherwise we must have shared in common with the private; and the contrast afforded comfort, though at the expence of compassion. We are more charitably disposed with our feelings on some occasions, than on others, and an object that has once awakened sympathy, may at another time pass with indifference; it was even so with ourselves, and we were oftener tempted to betray displeasure at a worn-out and limping soldier, than administer consolation.

The enemy did not press upon our rear, but contented himself with picking up those men, who from fatigue or indisposition, had fallen out from their regiments. Some baggage that had strayed or lost itself in the wood, we were marching through, likewise fell into their hands; and what between the weather and the empty state of our stomachs, a gloom was thrown over our march, which rendered us very indifferent companions for one another. Providence, by affording us a supply of acorns, had not altogether abandoned us to despair, and in alighting

to fill the haversack with those that had fallen from the trees, our horses were now and then enabled to pick up a little grass. At five o'clock in the evening, the army came to its *bivouac*, in a wood about two leagues distance from Tamames, the ground being in many places covered with water. The rain had discontinued, and the evening promised to be fine; but what was infinitely more consolatory, arose from an allowance of biscuit issued to the troops.

On the 17th, at six o'clock in the morning, the army which was well concentrated, left its encampment. Our brows lowered with the clouds, and occasionally heavy showers, drenching as they fell, rendered us no less penitent, than desirous of fair weather. Ploughed lands lay before us, with an extensive wood;—it was with difficulty we could march, the column halting every four or five minutes. We passed the commander of the forces here, who appeared anxious the troops should push on, and his aid-du-camps were much on the alert.

The enemy closely followed our rear, and as the weather was misty accompanied with rain, so that objects were rendered indistinct even at a little distance, the light companies of regiments were ordered to extend themselves through the wood, to protect our flanks and cover our baggage. We could not, however, prevent the great force of the enemy's cavalry from being felt, and they took every advantage to annoy us, which numbers and the state of the weather, afforded them. At this time, the baggage of the Earl of Dalhousie was reported to be taken, though it proceeded at the head of his division; and Sir Edward Paget having gone to the rear, to ascertain the cause of the interval or space between the 5th and 7th divisions, occasioned by the badness of the ground, was made prisoner. Sir Edward was unattended, but his rank of general officer, was known by the *chapeau-plumè*.

We were descending the heights near San Munoz, the wind blowing strong and it raining

fast. A body of British cavalry that had been laying in the village, advanced upon the hills on our left, to cover our rear by shewing front. They formed two open lines, and their long red and blue cloaks waving to the wind, had a very enlivening effect.

LETTER IX.

The French cavalry charge the Light Division, after fording the Huebra.—Allied army formed for battle on the heights of San Munoz.—Retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo.

The little village of San Munoz, lies in a valley at the extremity of two range of hills, which are covered with oak trees; along this valley, the river Huebra runs and empties itself into the Douro. The divisions as they forded this river, marched to the opposite hills, where they were formed in open columns of brigade, and halted. The difficulty of the ascent as well as descent into the valley, with the deepness and rapid current of the river, rendered this place very troublesome for troops followed by an enemy. The army continued fording the river, and

was regularly formed upon thehills. A thick fog came on about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the enemy availed himself of this circumstance to gain possession of a hill upon the right of our line, which was separated from those we were already upon, by a ravine, scarcely one quarter of a mile broad. Upon it the French brought up some mountain guns, and commenced a heavy fire upon the light division, commanded by Major-General Charles Alten, on its fording the river. The guns of Major Macdonald's troop of horse artillery, commenced a successful fire upon them, but unfortunately, during the cannonade, the Major was severely wounded. The division had no sooner crossed, than the French cavalry followed, and began to hem them in, and though our troops formed the square, yet the enemy succeeded in charging them on the way to the heights, and occasioning some loss.

Now the army was formed for battle, and every one forgot his fatigues in the anticipation of victory. The meagre soldier in our ranks,

whose furrowed cheeks bespoke an age of service, felt the fire of youth kindling in his veins, as the roar of the cannon played upon his ears; while the youth, who chiefly composed the strength of our battalions, had their memories too recently impressed with the brilliant achievements of Rodrigo, Badajos, and Salamanca, to have been readily forgotten. In the narration of these monuments of glory and human valour, did our soldiers beguile the time, previous to the battle. The spirit of enthusiasm was however raised to the highest pitch, by the electric effect of the words,—" Here he comes," which spread from mouth to mouth, with the rapidity of lightning. The noble commander passed our columns in review, as usual, unaccompanied with any mark of distinction or splendour; his long horse cloak, concealed his under garments;—his cocked hat soaked and disfigured with the rain.

We now offered the enemy battle, and though so greatly superior in every species of

force,* they refused, and the cannonade was continued on both sides, until the close of the day. We were much disappointed in their refusing battle; and the pleasure of vanquishing them, was more than equalled by the thought of feeding on their supplies.

The troops reposed on their arms, upon wet ground, and the trees which at the season of the year, had dropped their leaves, afforded but a pitiful cover from the winds. We were pretty well aware of the enemy's intention to get possession of Spain, without hazarding a battle; and concluded, that the following day's march by bringing us to the confines of Portugal, would put an end to the retreat. We were, there-

* The Duke of Wellington, in his dispatch from Ciudad Rodrigo, dated the 19th of November, 1812, mentions, that "the whole of the enemy's disposable force in Spain, was upon the Tormes in the middle of this month, (November) and they were certainly not less than eighty thousand men, but more probably ninety thousand; of these, ten thousand were cavalry; and as the Army of Portugal alone had one hundred pieces of cannon, it is probable that they had not less in all the armies than two hundred pieces."

fore, as anxious to commence the march, as we were to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and though this sensation, perhaps, was not equally felt by all, it was by too many. Some were fortunate enough to purchase from the Spanish troops a little pork, so fresh and warm, that we still might have imagined the pig reeking in the slaughter-house and weltering in its blood; but it was not on that account the less unsavoury. This meat being toasted before our fires, was eat with all the avidity, (notwithstanding the want of bread and savour of salt) hunger imposes.

The moon rose early, and between the light clouds that passed in rapid succession, diffused her splendid radiance over the wistfu camp; the stillness of which was only interrupted by the passing watch-word of sentries, and hoarse murmurs of our cattle. As we slumbered over the fires, our cloaks and blankets soaking with the wet, the orderlies about one o'clock, began to pass about with the general order to march; and between three and four

o'clock, on the morning of the 18th, we moved from the *bivouac,* and after proceeding half a mile, forded a large branch of the river Huebra, which detained the army a considerable time. The country before us was covered with gum-cistus and the dwarf oak, and the road in many places, so narrow and dirty, the men could only pass by files.

The enemy followed us this day only with their cavalry, and to keep them in check, some companies of the 60th regiment were disposed in the woods, who occasioned them much loss. The army having gained the high road, (which in summer is fine and level) we found it inundated with water, and in many places presented a formidable picture of destruction; numbers of dead cattle, broken waggons and cars;—stores and tents, being thrown away for want of carriage to bring them on.

We continued our march without interruption, and the distant view of the spires of Ciudad

Rodrigo, was hailed by our troops with a proportionate degree of enthusiasm, to that which the Greeks under Xenophon, exhibited in the almost miraculous retreat through Asia, when from the Colchian Mountains they beheld the Black Sea.

On the 19th and 20th of November, the army crossed the Agueda, the course of which river may be considered as marking the north-east boundary of Portugal from Spain.

LETTER X.

Summary of the Retreat.

Thus terminated the campaign of 1812; a campaign that will be ever memorable, from the signal advantages gained over the French. The reduction of those fortresses of very considerable strength, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos, on the Spanish frontier; the total overthrow of Marshal Marmont on the plains of Salamanca; and the abandonment of the siege of Cadiz, by Marshal Soult, reflect no less honour on the captain who commanded, than the troops who atchieved these important successes. Although it was impossible from the paucity of our forces, to keep possession of Spain, as we first threatened; yet the very able obligation imposed on Soult to

raise the siege of Cadiz, satisfied the most scrupulous expectation. By this act, the works thrown up by the enemy with much labour and zeal during many years, were destroyed; the artillery of immense calibre, which they had got cast on purpose and brought from Barcelona and Seville, was abandoned; in short, all the ability and industry of the most eminent French Engineer officers to reduce Cadiz, was rendered abortive by our advance to Burgos. Had this latter place fallen in September, or early in the month of October, before the remnants of Marshal Marmont's army had been reinforced, the British forces by destroying the bridges over the river, might have been enabled to have cantoned themselves on the west bank of the Ebro; by which, the French forces in the south would have been prevented from co-operating with those in the north, at least at this season. But as our means in the prosecution of the siege were limited, and the necessity urgent, we were obliged sacrifice to the latter, whatever advantages time might have given us in the former case; and

the movements of the French forces in the south of Spain corresponding with those in the north, induced the commander of the forces to abandon Burgos, and fall back on Sir Rowland Hill, who was retiring from Madrid.

This retreat was conducted over nearly one hundred and sixty miles of ground, in winter, when the aspect of nature is most wretched and forlorn, and at a season particularly severe. The country for the most part was champaign, and admirably calculated for the operations of cavalry, of which our force was small. Supplies fell short, for though the inhabitants sowed and reaped, the contending armies consumed, so that wherever the soldier came, famine followed. Hence arose the backwardness of the people to assist us, for as the oxen were embargoed for the use of the army, the plough necessarily stood still, and the sudden transition to indigence, was followed by indifference and despair. This was only a small share of their sufferings, compared to the destruction of their houses and property;

I have seen whole villages unroofed and pillaged by the French army, for the purpose of getting fuel to cook their provisions. Under these circumstances then, our situation would have been trying, even if we had not an enemy to contend with. But we had an enemy, whose armies were numerous and well commanded—an enemy, who by a rapid series of successes, during a course of twenty years, had awakened feelings of terror and admiration in every man's bosom; yet the British army retired with ranks unbroken and troops undismayed; they felt not the hardships attending a retreat, except that of hunger; the severity of the weather it was not in human power to controul, and even the want of provisions has not unfrequently been sustained by pursuing and victorious armies. Wherever the country allowed us to take a position, the army halted for battle. Positions were once considered equivalent to otherwise overwhelming numbers; but a new mode of warfare has shewn that the best position cannot withstand the manœuvring of superior forces, when de-

termined on its flanks, they threaten its communications with the rear. Every attempt to bring the enemy to action on the Tormes, was rendered abortive, by their outflanking or turning our position on that river, and even then, the hope was not destroyed, until it was ascertained the enemy were so strongly posted at Mozarbes, as to be inaccessible to attack.

LETTER XI.

Situation of affairs in Spain in 1812.—Marquis of Wellington's disapprobation of the conduct of the Officers.

SPAIN was at this time distracted by the intrigues and clashing opinions of its generals; and though the Cortes had by a decree, invested the Marquis of Wellington in the chief command of their armies, General Ballasteros refused to obey his orders. This disobedience very much affected the aspect of affairs, for had the Spanish general acted according to his instructions, Marshal Soult would have found an enemy hanging on his flank, interrupting his communications, and cutting off his supplies.

The want of power in the Cortes to enforce their decrees, was attended with the greatest injury to the patriot cause; and as indecision and want of unanimity prevailed, even among that body, so it was communicated to every part of Spain; the contest seemed to have no definite issue, and the nobility and people of consequence, either for safety or from disgust, had left Madrid for France. Year after year revolved, the people contributing largely to the support of the French armies, without even an ostensible form, much less executive government. Such was the state of things in Spain, when the British army entered; and as the demand for supplies increased, the situation of the people became worse, and those who had not from fear, abandoned their houses and property, and fled to the mountains, plainly told us,—they had rather things should remain under the government of Joseph Buonaparte, than be deprived of their all by our interference. Some again, impatient for monarchy, were for offering the crown of Spain to the Marquis of Wellington,

others to Joseph, and a third to Ferdinand. With regard to the latter, the lawful successor to the throne, the better informed people were by no means well disposed to support. For whatever share of freedom Spain formerly enjoyed under the protection of its Cortes, and however circumscribed the power of the Sovereign may have been by the laws, it is certain, for many years she had laboured under the most abject slavery; and now the people having risen almost unanimously, to resist the government of a foreign power, growing confident in their numbers, but still more so from the justice of their cause, were not disposed to continue in that state of servitude, which they considered, as just quitted, "The population is great," said a priest at Valtanas to me, "but poor; they have not the means to arm or equip themselves for the field; there was no energy or confidence in the government of Charles IV. and now we have one that cannot enforce its decrees. We did hope," he continued, "from the government of Joseph, something better, since nothing could be worse."

That the result of the retreat from Spain was not disadvantageous to the immediate object of its deliverance, the campaign of 1813, fully proved: for had not the retreat been influenced by the necessity which allows of no alternative, it answered a very political purpose, in the success and termination of the war in that part of Europe. The consumption of every kind of provision by the retiring and advancing armies, obliged the enemy to dispose of their forces in different parts of the country, and the difficulty of concentrating themselves on emergency, was soon apparent; for from the time the Allied army passed the Agueda, no force of consequence was assembled to dispute ground before the Marquis of Wellington passed the Ebro, and advanced his head-quarters to the neighbourhood of Vittoria.

After the troops had taken up their winter-quarters in Portugal, the commander of the forces expressed his disapprobation in general orders, of the conduct of officers commanding regiments, as of those of companies, during the retreat. In no

situation is the more strict discipline required, than by a retiring army, and here it is in general, the least successfully exercised. Officers become indifferent and men careless; the road to relaxation is no sooner opened than the most highly disciplined armies are converted into rabble. Notwithstanding the bravery and contempt of danger which has uniformly distinguished the British soldier, he exhibits less resolution and patience under privations and inclement seasons, than those of other countries; but this perhaps is more properly characteristic of the nation, than of the individual. Officers commanding battalions hold those of companies responsible for the conduct of their men, for the very obvious reason, that from the difference both in point of rank and situation, they are more intimately acquainted with their immediate habits and characters, than they are themselves; but from the Marquis's orders, it appeared, the colonel with the captain, and subaltern with the soldier, consulted their own comfort indiscriminately. The consequence was, many men had quitted their ranks, some with

a view of plunder and others from sickness, and either had not rejoined for a considerable time after, or had fallen into the hands of the enemy. In situations of distress, self-preservation supersedes all other considerations, and we prefer existence, however wretched, to its sacrifice for the good of others. This motive of self-consideration, is very incompatible with that disinterestedness and sense of honour, which distinguishes every corps in time of peace, and animates them in war; for then the destiny of one is so closely involved in the anxiety experienced for the safety of the whole, that personal feeling is rendered but a secondary consideration. This elevation of sentiment was displayed in many instances in our army. The servants and batmen* belonging to officers of rank, who were entitled to keep them from their corps, no sooner heard an engagement was expected, than they would earnestly pray to be permitted to join their battalions, and share the fate of their comrades.

* Soldiers employed to look after the cattle, &c.

It is this bond of union that renders armies invincible;—it is the same generous spirit that inspired the Theban youth, and which the ancients placed under that noble, but now, alas! lukewarm passion of friendship.

The commander of the forces upon every occasion, had endeavoured to further and provide for the comforts of the officers, and this practice of goodness, as a modern writer observes, is often more efficacious in establishing power, than the most splendid military success. The noble commander having provided for the officer, it was incumbent on the officer in a like manner, to look after his men; for one of the most formidable inconveniences Sir John Moore had to contend with, were troops dispirited by severity of weather and harrassed by long marches; who had sustained no defeat, or particular disaster. This general would not allow the officers of infantry the use of horses, and they shared in common all the fatigues of the private soldier, with constitutions and habits so very dissimilar. The conse-

quence was, that the army, which but a few months before disembarked in a high state of discipline, became disorganized, and the officers of companies, whose province it was to observe their men, were worn out, and disqualified for their duty. When a general officer of division, was in a similar manner, about to deprive the regimental officers of their horses, the Marquis of Wellington observed, "I think the officers cannot have too many comforts!"

FINIS.

Errata.

Page xxi Introduction, 21st line, for *forces in*, read *forces who in*. Page 55, line 13, for *take*, read *taken*.— Page 71, line 15, for *wistfu*, read *wistful*. Page 75, last line, for *very able obligation*, read *very obligation*.

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