WELLINGTON

THE RECORD OF A GREAT MILITARY CAREER

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"INDIA: FROM THE ARYAN INVASION TO THE GREAT SEPOY MUTINY"

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ARTHUR WELLESLEY, DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

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PREFACE

THE extraordinary interest manifested by the public at the present moment in military affairs suggested to the Publishers that a short life of the first Duke of Wellington would not be unwelcome. Most people live at such high pressure now-a-days that they cannot spare the time for reading lengthy biographies; and for this reason many works of great interest and merit remain unread—perhaps almost forgotten. Maxwell's well-known volumes on the life and victories of the great Duke would appear to be a case in point; and the present work pretends to be little more than an attempt, by means of judicious epitomizing and quotation, with occasional helps from other sources, to gather within a small compass the most salient features of those volumes.

If, therefore, the reader will place whatever is best in the volume to the credit of Maxwell, and whatever may be weak and unworthy of that gallant soldier to the credit of the present writer, he will probably be giving

each his due.[1] Certainly it is farthest from the desire of the latter to get honour to himself out of the book; though he claims to have done his work honestly, and with painstaking care.

A. E. K.

[1] Exception ought perhaps to be made in regard to the Indian portion of the biography, for which the present writer has drawn considerably upon a volume from his own pen in the "Romance of Colonization" series—namely, *India: From the Aryan Invasion to the Great Sepoy Mutiny*.

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WELLINGTON

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

ARTHUR WELLESLEY, Duke of Wellington, was born at Dangan Castle, in the county of Meath, on the 1st of May, 1769, the year that gave birth to Napoleon Buonaparte. He was the third surviving son of Garret Wellesley, second Earl of Mornington, by Anne, eldest daughter of Arthur Hill, Viscount Dungannon. The Wellesleys derive their origin from the Colleys, or Cowleys, of Rutlandshire.

The second Lord Mornington, a man of polished manners and hospitable disposition, took no part in public business, devoting himself almost exclusively to the study and practice of music, in which, as a composer, he acquired a considerable reputation. Although nearly self-taught, his compositions were admired by the first musicians of the day; and some of his glees, notably "Hail, hallowed Fane!" "Come,

Fairest Nymph," "Here in Cool Grot," and "Go, Happy Shade!" are still remembered. A taste like his was naturally averse from the turmoil of political intrigue; and, happy in his family and friends, Lord Mornington avoided the bustle of the crowd, and lived loved and respected. He died in the noon of life, leaving a large family and a property considerably encumbered; but his eldest son, who became Governor-General of India and was created Marquis of Wellesley, confided the management of his patrimony to the care of his excellent mother, and at once assumed the payment of his father's debts, an act the more honourable because it was entirely discretionary.

The subject of this biography, the Honourable Arthur Wellesley, began his education at Eton, and continued it under the care of a clergyman[1] at Brighton; but at neither place is he said to have given promise of future distinction—doubtless because the proper field for his energies was not the narrow enclosures of classical study, but the busy world of action.

He thrashed one or two boys at school, and took care of the pet toad of an absent boy. He would watch his school-fellows keenly at their play, and speak out fearlessly if anything unfair or underhand was attempted. Like most Eton boys, he cut his name on the historic door, and was not well pleased

[1] Rev. H. Michell, M.A.

in after years to find that the name had been obliterated. He beat Bobus Smith soundly, and had he met him in later life would no doubt have thrashed him still more thoroughly (though with other weapons than his fists), for Bobus, though something of a wit, does not appear to have been a lad of much promise.

On leaving Brighton Wellesley was placed in the Military College of Angers, in the Department of the Maine and Loire, as a fitter school for one already destined to the profession of arms; and here he acquired a perfect knowledge of the French language, which was of the utmost service to him in after life. Even at Angers he exhibited no marked superiority, a contrast in this respect to his contemporary at Brienne, Napoleon Buonaparte, who displayed martial propensities in everything connected with his studies or his sports.

In regard to this period of Wellesley's life, Maxwell discounts the well-known story that Lady Mornington, finding her son Arthur troublesome, "dropped him at Douay," and did not see him again for two years. The story adds that the place of their rencounter was the Haymarket Theatre, and that Lady Mornington exclaimed on seeing him, "I do believe there is my ugly boy Arthur."

On the 7th of March, 1787, Arthur Wellesley obtained his first commission, being gazetted to an Ensigncy in the 73rd Regiment; and on the 25th of

the following December he was promoted to a Lieutenancy in the 76th. In the succeeding month he exchanged into the 41st, and on the 25th of June was appointed to the 12th Light Dragoons. On the 30th of June, 1791, he was promoted to a company in the 58th Foot; and on the 31st of October, 1792, obtained a troop in the 18th Light Dragoons.

Meanwhile (in 1790) he was returned to the Irish Parliament for Trim, a borough the patronage of which belonged to the house of Mornington; and two years later seconded the Address to the Throne. His appearance at this time is described as ruddy-faced and juvenile, and he was popular among the young men of his age and station. A visitor to the Irish Parliament House in 1793 thus speaks of him—

"A young man, dressed in a scarlet uniform, with very large epaulettes, caught my eye, and I inquired who he was. 'That,' replied my friend, 'is Captain Wellesley, a brother of Lord Mornington, and one of the aides-de-camp of the Lord-Lieutenant.' 'I suppose he never speaks,' I added. 'You are wrong; he does speak sometimes, and when he does, believe me, it is always to the purpose.' The subject which occupied the attention of the house that night, was one of deep importance in Irish politics. A further concession to the claims of the Roman Catholics had been recommended in a speech from the Throne, and an animated debate resulted. Captain Wellesley

spoke on the occasion; and his remarks were terse and pertinent, his delivery fluent, and his manner unembarrassed."

Captain Wellesley's patrimony was small, and his staff appointment more fashionable than lucrative; hence it is not surprising that soon after he had come of age he found himself involved in pecuniary difficulties. At this time he lodged in the house of an opulent bootmaker, who resided on Lower Ormond Quay, and the worthy tradesman having discovered accidentally that his young inmate was suffering annoyance from his inability to discharge a pressing demand, waited upon him, told him that he was apprized of his embarrassments, added that he had money unemployed, and offered him a loan, which was accepted. The obligation was soon afterwards repaid; and the young aide-de-camp was enabled, in a few years, to present his humble friend to an honourable and lucrative situation. Nor did death cancel the obligation; the Duke's patronage, after the parent's death, was extended to his son, for whom he obtained a valuable appointment.

Arthur Wellesley's professional advancement was extremely rapid. An ensign at eighteen; a lieutenant at nineteen; captain at twenty-one; major (33rd Foot) at twenty-four; and lieutenant-colonel at twenty-five—these were his promotions to the autumn of 1794, and up to that time he had seen no active

service. But the political horizon of Europe had long been seriously overcast, and the parliamentary career of the young soldier was soon to be interrupted by a summons to attend his duties in the field.

France, in particular, was fearfully convulsed; the Reign of Terror was at its height; the Republican Army had been increased to 450,000 men, and the extraordinary success that had attended these raw and undisciplined levies had roused Britain into unwonted energy. The French Royalist party, though frightfully persecuted, still maintained a courage and displayed an attitude of resistance worthy of a better fortune; and there was hope that if the Bourbons were supported from abroad, a reaction might be produced, and the alarming spread of Republicanism arrested. To effect this object, an expedition was prepared with all possible dispatch for making a descent on the coast of Brittany, the command of which was entrusted to the Earl of Moira.

In July 1794 the 33rd Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Wellesley, landed at Ostend, and was presently joined by a body of troops under Lord Moira; the object being to reinforce the armies of the Coalition, which had already been driven from the soil of France, and were at that moment making a vain attempt to maintain themselves in Hainault and Austrian Flanders.

It was not at Hainault or Flanders, however, but at

Antwerp that Wellesley first saw an army in the field. Here the Duke of York, just drawn from his position at Tournay and much in need of succour, had pitched his camp. At Antwerp, then, the future conqueror of Napoleon received his first lesson in practical warfare; and although this, his opening campaign, offered but few opportunities of distinction, he did not fail to avail himself of all that presented themselves. In every affair in which the 33rd Regiment was engaged, it was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Wellesley; and on the river Neethe, in a warm affair near the village of Boxtel, and in a fierce skirmish on the Waal, it did good service. At the close of the campaign he was selected by General Sir David Dundas to cover, with the brigade to which his regiment was attached, the memorable retreat from Holland; a duty which he performed to the full satisfaction of that intrepid soldier. This movement was commenced in the middle of January 1795, during a winter of unusual rigour, and was peculiarly trying to the tempers and constitutions of men already exhausted by continued fatigue, and without the clothing or comforts which might have helped to mitigate the severity of the task.

The sufferings endured in this retreat were most acute. The route from the frozen banks of the Leck to the barren provinces of Gueldreland and Over-Yssel was across desert and flat heaths, with but few houses on the way, and those scattered singly or in small

hamlets, which afforded little or no cover for the troops. There was a hard frost, and bitter winds and blinding sleet from the north-east directly met them on the march. The casualty of sinking down in a torpor of fatigue, and sleeping the sleep of death, was of frequent occurrence. The duty which devolved upon the young commanding officer of the rear-guard was consequently one which demanded incessant vigilance. This command, the post of honour in a retreat, stamped the young soldier, even at that early period, as a noticeable man. Notwithstanding their sufferings, the British who formed part of the expedition returned home in good heart, if with lively prejudices against the sans-culottes of Republican France, and a full disposition to try a fall with them whenever an opportunity might occur.

Worthy of note, too, in regard to the disastrous Flanders campaign is Wellesley's readiness on all occasions to speak in defence of the Commander-in-Chief of the expedition, the Duke of York. Amid the discontent of a retreat, and the blind clamour which was raised against the Duke in Parliament some years afterwards, young Wellesley was ever on the alert to bear testimony to the reforms which his Royal Highness had effected in the British military service, and to claim for him the merit to which he was, on this ground at least, most certainly entitled.

A serious illness, in April 1796, prevented Wellesley

from accompanying his regiment—at least, in the first stage of its passage—to India; but he joined it a few months later at the Cape of Good Hope, and was with the regiment when it landed at Calcutta in February of the following year. During his voyage out he is said to have passed much of his time in reading, and in studies connected with the military history of the country he was about to visit.

We now reach an important period of Wellesley's life, for which a new chapter must be reserved.

CHAPTER II

WELLESLEY IN INDIA

THE first portion of Wellesley's Indian life is almost entirely woven in with the history of Mysore, which at that time was an independent kingdom ruled over by Tippû Sultân, son of the renowned Hyder Ali, who had usurped the throne about thirty-five years previously. Hyder had given the British a deal of trouble in his day, twice invading the Carnatic, and on the second of those occasions spreading terror and desolation to the very walls of Fort St. George[1]; but Sir Eyre Coote had so punished him at Porto Novo, Pollilore, and Sholingur, that Hyder would probably have made peace with the British on terms advantageous to the latter had not death cut short his career.

The new Sultân, Tippû Sahib was fired with an

[1] See *India* in S. W. Partridge and Co.'s "Romance of Colonization" Series, a volume which covers the field of Indian history, in a popular manner, from the Aryan invasion to the great Sepoy Mutiny.

ambition to drive the British out of India, and proved to be a more formidable enemy than his father. His struggle with the East India Company ended only with his death, and engaged the anxious attention of four successive Governors-General, last and chief of whom was Colonel Wellesley's eldest brother, Lord Mornington, who set foot in India about fifteen months after his soldier-brother's arrival. The appointment of Lord Mornington was both wise and judicious; for a man more eminently qualified for the office of Governor-General could not have been selected. A man of genius, refined by education, he was possessed of a comprehensive mind; and to him belongs the credit of having destroyed the foolish idea of a balance of power among the native princes, of balancing them one against the other, and of secretly encouraging their enmities, in order to obtain power over all, without seeming to interfere with any. In fact his policy was a policy of intervention—an imperial policy—his object being to maintain the peace of India by boldly asserting the paramount power. Tippû Sultân, however, wanted to assert the paramount power too; and so came war.

Like his father, Tippû was a cool and daring soldier, and a man of great energy and resource—facts to which his letters, still extant, bear ample witness. In his eagerness to crush the English, he not only sought the aid of the native princes of India,

high and low, but also of the Shah of Persia and the petty chieftains of Arabia. Moreover, on the outbreak of the French Republic, he had entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with that people, calling himself "Citizen of the French Republic"; and, still later, had sent letters to Napoleon in Egypt, and ambassadors to the Governor of the Mauritius, which was at that time in the possession of France.

As regards what are known as the Mysore wars, the name of Arthur Wellesley is only connected with the fourth and last, which belongs to the closing scenes of Tippû's life. One of the first objects that engaged Lord Mornington's attention, after his accession to the Governor-Generalship, was the equivocal attitude of Tippû, who, besides infringing his treaties with the English and intriguing with Buonaparte, had been seeking to obtain a levy of French troops to assist him in taking possession of the South of India. Buonaparte was now in Egypt, and affairs began to look threatening: and it was a relief to the Governor-General when the Directors of the East India Company wrote out authorizing the war. Lord Mornington made all his arrangements with promptitude, and the 33rd Regiment was sent down to Madras, his brother accompanying it. Then a last attempt was made to negotiate with Tippû; but Tippû procrastinated, and wrote to Zemân Shâh, ruler of Afghânistan, inviting him to join the "Holy

War," in which the infidel English were "to become food for the swords of the pious warriors." The ambitious hopes of the Mysorean prince were also strengthened by a letter from Napoleon, who stated that he had "arrived on the borders of the Red Sea, with an innumerable and invincible army, full of the desire of delivering him from the iron yoke of England!"

Tippû treated the Governor-General's envoy with contempt; and was thereupon informed that General Harris was advancing with an army into Mysore, but would still be prepared to receive any embassy which he (Tippû) might choose to send. Lord Mornington and the Governor of Madras, a son of the great Clive, had meanwhile, by unparalleled efforts, raised and fully equipped an army of 20,800 men, of whom 6000 were Europeans. To these were added 10,000 of the Nizam of Hyderabad's[1] cavalry, with 10,000 foot under the nominal command of the Nizam's son, but really under the direction of Colonel Wellesley. General Stewart led the Bombay troops, with whom were General Hartley and Colonel Montresor, the route of their march being from Cannanûr through Kûrg to Periapatam. General (afterwards Lord) Harris was Commander-in-Chief of the whole forces.[2]

[1] The Nizam had lately agreed to a subsidiary alliance with the English Government.

[2] Pope's *Indian History*, p. 426.

The point to be ultimately reached by the combined Anglo-Indian armies was Seringapatam, a strongly fortified island in the river Cauvery, and virtually the capital of Mysore; and whilst the Bombay army was on its way thither, Montresor's brigade a few miles in advance of the rest was surrounded by the enemy, and would certainly have been cut to pieces but for the distinguished gallantry with which it maintained its ground till reinforcements came up. Then the enemy, who numbered 11,000 before the action, were beaten off with a loss of 1500 men; the losses to the gallant brigade being only 140. Yet the combatants on both sides were natives,—a proof how much discipline has to do with the stability of a military force. This first struggle took place at Sedasîr,[1] from which the battle takes it name; and the defeated army was commanded by Tippû in person.

The next battle was at Malavelly, when General Harris engaged the enemy. The 33rd Regiment under Colonel Wellesley had some stiff work during the day, having to stand the onset of 2000 of the Sultân's best trained infantry, who advanced firmly to within sixty paces before delivering their fire. Then the 33rd, led on by their Colonel. charged these Cushoons, bayonet in hand, and overthrew them. The cavalry, commanded by General Floyd, were

[1] A few miles from Periapatam.

soon among their broken ranks, and the battle was over. Having witnessed the destruction of his best troops by a corps scarcely one-third their number, and retired his guns, Tippû abandoned the field to his conquerors, leaving 2000 of his troops upon the field. The British losses were trifling—20 killed and 80 wounded.

Tippû arrived at Seringapatam on the 14th of March, 1799; but not till the 5th of the following month did the British army take up its position opposite the fort. The position was admirably chosen. It was on rising ground, on the south side of the river, about two miles from the fort, which occupied the western extremity of the island. An aqueduct, fifteen yards wide and six deep, served as a strong entrenchment, and at the same time furnished an unfailing supply of excellent water; while in the rear were several deep ravines impracticable for the enemy's cavalry, which secured the besiegers against any surprise from that quarter.

Tippû, who had made his most elaborate preparations in view of the attack from the north, was greatly discomfited when he heard that the Feringhis (Franks) had forded the river at Sosilli, and had taken up a position along the south bank. He became suddenly despondent, and, calling together his chief *sirdhars*, exclaimed fatalistically, "We have arrived at our last stage: what is your determin-

ation?" They answered, like true soldiers, "To die along with you." A gloomy consultation was then held, to consider by what fords General Harris was likely to cross into the island, and to decide upon the best means of opposing him. As a result of their deliberations, Tippû drew out his whole army to a place called Chendgal, a strong position in the line of the General's presumed route, prepared to meet victory or death. His surprise and mortification were great when, instead of proceeding by the way expected, the British army took a different route, and never approached him at a shorter distance than three miles.

On the 5th of April an attack was made upon some of the enemy's infantry and rocket-men, who, under cover of several ruined hamlets and rocky eminences at the rear of the aqueduct, had occasioned some apprehension for the safety of the park of artillery stores. The troops selected for the work were divided into two parties, one of which, commanded by Colonel Wellesley, was directed to drive the enemy from a tope (grove or thicket) to the left of the village of Sultânpettah. Wellesley's column was unprovided with guns, and he foresaw the failure of the attempt.

The ground had not been properly reconnoitred, and the guns were sent with the wrong column. While the bayonet is the best weapon with which to drive an enemy out of houses, grape and canister

seem best adapted to clear topes. The darkness of the night was moreover unfavourable to such an operation, and the interior of the tope being everywhere intersected by canals for irrigating the betel-plants, confused the assailants, and left them no alternative but to retire. In so doing, Colonel Wellesley was struck on the knee by a spent ball, and narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the enemy, having wandered for several hours in darkness before he could regain the camp.

At break of day the attack was renewed with complete success, Wellesley taking a conspicuous part in the action. "With an ardour and impetuosity which were the marks of his professional character," says a writer in the *East India United Service Journal*, "he dashed on so vehemently with the 33rd, that the 10th Sepoys, who were laden with knapsacks—that stupid and annoying appendage to a native soldier—were left considerably in the rear; the consequence of which was that Colonel Wellesley found himself close upon the enemy, and his regiment unsupported. The moment was critical, but fortunately the Sultân's troops neglected to take advantage of it, and allowed the 33rd to remain halted and unmolested, when the charge was more judiciously made and the object of it effected. When the 10th came up, Colonel Wellesley laughed and said, 'This won't do—I was much to blame; we

must be more careful another time.'" The flints were taken out, rocks and ruins cleared by the bayonet, and the British were now able to establish a connected line of strong posts from the village of Sultânpettah to the river, a distance of nearly two miles.

As day by day the siege-works continued to make steady progress, Tippû became more and more convinced of his inability to make a successful defence. Then he endeavoured—as he had once or twice endeavoured before—to negotiate. He requested a conference "for the clearing up of matters at issue;" but the time for conferences had gone by, and General Harris replied by forwarding the Sultân the draft of a preliminary treaty, with the intimation that if its demands were not complied with in four-and-twenty hours, even larger calls might be made upon him. It cannot be denied that the terms of the proposed treaty were extravagant and humiliating; but Tippû had only himself to thank for it. He flew into a passion on reading the document, and disdained to return an answer. "Better die like a soldier," said he, "than live a miserable pensioner of the infidels."

The siege was now pressed with vigour, and though the enemy offered a brave resistance, they were driven, piece by piece, from all their exterior entrenchments, till, by the 27th of April, only the rocky bed of the

river separated the besiegers from the fort. The unhappy Sultân was by this time at his wits' end. Negotiations had failed, and in his extremity he turned to religion as his only hope. The debauchee and man of blood (for he was both) became assiduous in his attendance at the mosque, and while observing the rites of Islam with punctilious devotion, begged his attendants to add their "amen" to his prayers. Formerly he had been an active persecutor of the Brahmins; he now bribed them liberally to join their intercessions for his deliverance with those of the imaums of his own religion. So far did his fear and infatuation carry him that he even called in the aid of astrology and planetary influences, and unfavourable omens were made the subjects of grave and anxious inquiry. Yet the adepts in that eerie science knew too well the odds against which the Sultân was playing, and spoke only of approaching calamity.

On the 2nd of May a breach sixty yards wide was begun near the north-west angle of the fort, immediately to the north of the bastion; and on the following day this breach was rendered practicable. It was decided to make the grand assault on the 4th. The storming party, to the number of 4376, was placed under the command of General (afterwards Sir David) Baird, a gallant soldier who knew the fortress well, and had cause to know it, for he had

been a fettered prisoner there for four years in the time of Hyder Ali. He was about to re-enter the place under very different circumstances.

The time fixed for the assault was one o'clock; and as the hour drew near, General Harris retired alone to his tent, thoughtful and not a little anxious. "We have serious work on hand," he remarked to his aide-de-camp, Captain Malcolm. "Don't you see that European sentry over my tent is so weak from want of food, and from exhaustion, that a Sepoy could push him down? We must take the fort or perish in the attempt. I have ordered General Baird to persevere in his attack to the last extremity. If he is beaten off, Wellesley is to proceed with the troops to the trenches; and if he also should not succeed, I shall put myself at the head of the remainder of the army: for success is necessary to our existence."

Precisely at one o'clock the assault commenced, Baird leading on his men in person. With a cheery "Follow me!" he drew his sword, and the storming party dashed forward. Crossing the rocky bed of the Cauvery, they made directly for the breach. In vain did the Mysoreans, from their places of vantage on the ramparts, open a concentrated fire with cannon, musketry, and wall-pieces upon the advancing column. In vain, as the red-coats threw themselves into the breach, were they clubbed and sabred and shot down

by the swarthy soldiers of the Sultân. Directly one fell, another took his place, and the enemy had to give way at last before the inrushing flood. The bravest of Tippû's troops could not hold their own before the terrible charge of British bayonets. At last, when thousands had fallen and the ramparts were slippery with blood, the survivors lost courage, and throwing down their arms, fled in hopeless confusion.

The most memorable feature of the assault was the fight at one of the gateways on the north face of the fort, for it was there that Tippû was slain. In the heat of the struggle he was struck by three musket-balls, and as he lay wounded on the ground the glitter of some gold embroidery on his sword-belt attracted the attention of an English soldier. The soldier was attempting to tear off the belt when the wounded man made a cut at him with his sabre. His despoiler warded off the blow, and then, levelling his musket, shot the Sultân dead. Wellesley, who viewed the body a few hours afterwards, could hardly be persuaded that the Sultân was not still alive, so remarkably placid was the expression of the features and so life-like the appearance of the eyes; nor could he be convinced that the tiger-spirit had escaped until he had pressed the heart and pulse with his fingers.[1]

[1] The account of the siege of Seringapatam is based chiefly upon the account given in *India: From the Aryan Invasion*

On the morning of the 5th, Wellesley was directed to take command of the fortress; and owing to his firmness in enforcing the penalties upon persons found plundering houses or ill-treating the inhabitants, confidence and good order were speedily restored among the inhabitants, and in less than three days the bazaars were re-opened for the sale of merchandise and provisions. By the 14th of May the war was entirely at an end, and Colonel Wellesley, now become Governor of Mysore, was one of the Commissioners appointed to partition the conquered territory among the allies.

His new appointment gave him ample leisure to turn his attention to the civil administration of the extensive province over which he had been placed; the only check to this peaceful employment, during a space of eighteen months, being an expedition against a robber chief named Dhundiah Waugh, who, with a following of 5000 horse, was threatening the position of Mysore. Crossing the Tungabudra river with a body of troops in June 1800, Wellesley presently came up with the detached camp of the freebooter at Malowny, on the Malpoorpa. Pressing forward with his cavalry only, the Colonel cut up and drove into the river all the combatants he found there; took animals, baggage, etc.; and closed the

to the Great Sepoy Mutiny, but facts have been added from Maxwell.

affair by making a party of his European dragoons swim across the river and seize a boat. By this means he contrived to possess himself of the enemy's guns, which had been transported to the opposite bank before his arrival. Not till the 10th of September, however, did he overtake Dhundiah's main force, which was drawn up in a very strong position near the village of Cunagull. One resolute charge and the fate of the bandit and his followers was decided. They were all cut up or dispersed, everything in their camp taken, and Dhundiah himself slain.

The whole period of Wellesley's stay in Mysore was about three years, towards the close of which he was promoted to be Major-General. His time had been well and wisely spent. The several provinces had been visited; the situation and wants of the people had been inquired into with great thoroughness; and many abuses which had crept in during the reign of Tippû had been reformed. Foreseeing, too, that war with the Mahrattas was inevitable, Wellesley had employed his leisure in preparing an able and elaborate memorandum on the value of Seringapatam to the East India Company; proving that the possession of that fortress, and its maintenance as a stronghold, were essential to the power and interests of the British in Mysore. He also drew up a memorandum upon operations in the Mahratta territory, in which he recommended among other

useful provisions, that military operations should commence when the rivers fill—that is about July—because when full they impeded the movements of the Mahratta troops, which were mainly composed of cavalry. His knowledge was turned to practical account when, in February 1803, he received instructions to march upon Pûna, the central capital of the Mahrattas, with the view of reinstating the young Peishwa.

A word or two as to the origin of this, the second Mahratta war. In allocating the different provinces of the Mysore dominions the East India Company took possession of Canara, Coimbatore, and the Wynad, comprising about a third of the whole territory. The distribution of the remaining two-thirds among our allies in the Mysore war was made contingent upon the carrying out of certain treaty engagements. Lord Mornington felt, indeed, that the time had come for making known his policy—the maintenance of peace by subsidiary alliances—to the fighting powers that remained—namely, the Nizam of the Deccan and the Mahrattas; and here was a bribe to make them pliant. The scheme which he put forward was a novelty in history. Every State was to cede sufficient territory for the maintenance of a standing army, which was to be put at the disposal of the paramount power for putting down all wars and feuds, all revolts or revolutions, of every

sort and kind. The British being the paramount power, the Governor-General's policy was, of course, a most convenient one for the Company. The Nizam agreed to it, and received a large portion of the conquered territory in ratification of the treaty which he signed with us; but the young Peishwa, to whom a similar share was offered, on similar terms, shilly-shallied. He was willing to receive the share in satisfaction of Mahratta claims to *chout*[1] in Mysore; and had no objection to maintaining a subsidiary force of Sepoys at Pûna, under the command of British officers, provided he might use it against his refractory lieutenants, Sindhia and Holkar (the virtual rulers of Malwa), and the Raja of Berar, as well as in the collection of *chout*: but he would not accept the British Government as the arbiter of peace and war, or agree to a proposal, which also formed part of the Governor-General's scheme, that he should disband his French battalions.

Troubles with his own lieutenants at last drove the Peishwa to submission. Jeswant Rao Holkar, an illegitimate prince of the house of Holkar, raised an army of freebooting horsemen, and though defeated by the French troops in the pay of Sindhia, succeeded in routing the Peishwa's army, and spreading dismay through the Mahratta country. Homeless and a

[1] *Chout:* a fourth of the revenues of a country, originally exacted by the Mahrattas.

fugitive, the Peishwa fled to Bassein, and there, on condition of being restored to the throne of Pûna by the British, he accepted the subsidiary alliance.

A rather anomalous state of things was produced by this event. The Peishwa of the great Mahratta empire had become a vassal of the British Government, while his own vassals or lieutenants, commanding powerful armies in Central India, were independent of that government. Nor were the lieutenants agreed among themselves. The Gaekwar of Baroda, following in the lines of the Peishwa, joined the British alliance; Jeswant Holkar, after enthroning himself at Indore, maintained a strictly neutral position; and Sindhia and the Raja of Berar were left alone in their opposition. Then came war.

As this volume is a life of Wellington, and not a *résumé* of Anglo-Indian history, we will say nothing of the movements of the British army under General Lake, which was sent into Hindustan to deal with the French battalions under General Perron; but confine ourselves, and that very briefly, to the doings of Major-General Wellesley, who about the same time (February 1803) marched an army into the Deccan, in the wake of the refractory Raja and Sindhia, with the view, as we have said, of reinstating the fugitive Peishwa at Pûna. Reaching Hurryhurr on the 9th of March, Wellesley crossed the Tungabudra and Havanur on the 12th, and proceeded by forced

marches towards the Mahratta capital. Learning on his way that one of the Peishwa's lieutenants had threatened to burn the city, the General pushed on with all his cavalry, and performing a march of sixty miles in thirty hours, reached Pûna and saved it from destruction. On the 13th of May the Peishwa re-entered his capital.

But that was not the end of the war. After fruitless attempts at negotiation with Sindhia, Wellesley marched from Pûna to the north, and took by escalade the town of Ahmednuggar, which was garrisoned by Sindhia's troops. On the 24th of August he crossed the Godavery river, and entered Aurungabad on the 29th. On the 12th of September he was encamped twenty miles north of the Godavery. Afraid of British discipline, Sindhia's object was to wear out the British troops by continual marches and a sort of predatory warfare; Wellesley understood his purpose, and manœuvred to precipitate a general conflict. About the middle of September he received intelligence that Sindhia had been reinforced by sixteen battalions of infantry, commanded by French officers, and a large train of artillery, and that the whole of his force was assembled near the banks of the Kaitna river. So soon as the enemy heard of the arrival of Major-General Wellesley at Aurungabad, they moved from Jalna to the southward and eastward, threatening a march on

Hyderabad. The General, however, by taking the left bank of the Godavery, placed himself between them and that city, and effectually frustrated their design.

A few days later tidings came that the enemy were at Bokardun, and the General directed his march so as to encamp within twelve miles of that place, but when he halted found that he was only six miles from it. He also learned that the cavalry of the Mahratta camp was already in motion to the rear, and that the infantry and guns were preparing to follow. There was no time to be lost. Taking the 19th Dragoons and three regiments of the regular cavalry, he hastened to reconnoitre, and soon came in sight of the enemy which had hitherto so carefully eluded him. But instead of infantry only, the whole combined army of Sindhia and the Raja, numbering some 56,000 combatants, with 100 pieces of cannon, were in sight, strongly posted before the fortified village of Assye. It was a sight to appal the stoutest heart. Wellesley paused for a moment, impressed but not daunted: his whole force did not exceed 8000 men, of whom 1600 were cavalry: the effective native British were not above 1500; and he had only seventeen pieces of cannon. As the British cavalry came up, they formed in lines on the heights, and presented a strange but glorious contrast to the multitude of Mahratta horsemen, who were seen in

endless array below them. The village was situated within the fork formed by the junction of two small rivers, the Kaitna and the Juah; a position admirably adapted for defence, but offering palpable disadvantages in the event of a retreat. It was this latter fact which led Wellesley to exclaim as he stood gazing at the host before him, "They cannot escape me!"

The opening attack was delivered on the enemy's left, which was composed entirely of infantry. The narrow V-shaped space was too confined to allow room for the Mahratta cavalry to manœuvre to much advantage, while the defeat of the corps of infantry was most likely to be effectual. Though faint after a fatiguing march of twenty-two miles, the British troops moved forward in splendid style, and after firing a single volley, stormed the first line of guns at the point of the bayonet. They then advanced, in equally good order, on the second line of guns, and captured that also. Flushed with success, they were about to continue the advance, when suddenly they heard a cannonade in the rear, and, almost simultaneously with the sound, several of their companions stumbled over, shot from behind. The authors of this lively and unexpected attack were the Mahratta gunners of the first line, who had thrown themselves down and simulated death at the first onset, but had sprung to their feet and manned the guns anew when

the conquering regiments had passed on. Under these circumstances the battle had, in a manner, to be fought over again, and under added disadvantages. Some of Sindhia's battalions, which had been retiring in good order, observed the temporary confusion in the British lines, and faced about; while numerous bodies of his cavalry hovered menacingly at a short distance. This, indeed, was the critical point of the battle, and Wellesley instantly recognized the fact. Placing himself at the head of the Ross-shire Highlanders and the 7th Native Cavalry, he charged the Mahratta gunners, and, after a desperate and bloody contest, retrieved the situation.

Sindhia's retreating infantry, which had halted and turned about on witnessing the success of the gunners' ruse, were taken in hand by Colonel Maxwell, who unfortunately was shot dead while leading on his regiment, the 19th. On receiving the fatal ball he threw up his arms in his death agony, and his horse suddenly halted. Supposing this to be a signal to fall back, his men wheeled to the right, and galloped in some disorder along the line of the enemy's fire; but the mistake was no sooner discovered than they re-formed, and returned to the charge with a gallantry which more than atoned for the failure of their first advance. The gallant Maxwell had, indeed, perished almost in the moment of victory, and the charge of his brigade decided finally the fortunes of the day.

The rout was now complete. The sun at noon had shone on a proud array of 50,000 men, drawn up in perfect order; it set upon a broken host, flying in dispersed bodies from a field on which the whole *matériel* of an army remained abandoned. Under more desperate circumstances a battle was never fought; and, opposed by overwhelming masses, a victory was never more completely won. Everything at noon was against the conquerors; numbers, position, all that could render victory almost a certain event, lay with the Mahratta chieftains. Small as the British force was, its energies were weakened by a long and exhausting march beneath a sultry sky; and nothing but indomitable courage could have sustained Wellesley's feeble battalions against the mighty masses to which they were opposed. Assye was indeed a glorious triumph: "It was a magnificent display of skill, moral courage, and perfect discipline, against native bravery and enormous physical superiority."

Some idea of the severity of the battle may be formed from the fact that the casualties on the side of the British exceeded 1500—that is, more than a third of the troops actually engaged—while the enemy left 1200 dead upon the field, and their wounded covered the country round. Ninety-eight pieces of cannon, mostly brass and of the largest calibre, were taken, together with seven standards,

the camp equipage, bullocks, camels, and a vast quantity of stores. Wellesley's orderly dragoon was killed by a round-shot immediately beside him; and the General himself lost two horses—one piked and the other shot under him.

The day following the battle, the Nizam's auxiliary force, commanded by Colonel Stevenson, united with the British forces at Assye; and when that distinguished officer had reduced the city of Burhampore, and taken Fort Asirghar, the war in the Deccan was practically at an end.

Wellesley, who had for some time expressed an anxious wish to retire from the command in Mysore, now found his opportunity for taking that step: and when it was officially announced that he had determined to return to England, he was flooded with addresses and testimonials. A monument in commemoration of the battle of Assye was erected at Calcutta; the inhabitants of that city presented the conqueror with a sword of the value of a thousand guineas; and his own officers testified their attachment and admiration by the gift of a service of plate. In England, the thanks of Parliament were voted to him, and he was made a Knight Companion of the Bath, though the Home Government might have made some worthier acknowledgment of his great services. Of all the honours paid him, however, none gratified him more than the parting address of the people of

Seringapatam, who fully appreciated the blessings of his firm though just administration.

After being entertained at a grand banquet early in the spring of the year following his great victory, he embarked on board the *Trident* man-of-war; and on the 10th of March (1804) set sail for England.

CHAPTER III

ROLIÇA AND VIMIERO

THE next important event in the life of Sir Arthur Wellesley was his marriage, on the 10th of April, 1806, to Catherine Pakenham, third daughter of the Earl of Longford. Two sons were the issue of this marriage,—Arthur, Marquess of Douro, born on the 3rd of February, 1807; and Charles, born on the 16th of January, 1808. His appearance and habits of life about the time of his marriage have thus been sketched by Major Sherer, one of his most devoted followers—

"General Wellesley was a little above the middle height, well limbed, and muscular, with little incumbrance of flesh beyond that which gives shape and manliness to the outline of the figure; with a firm tread, an erect carriage, a countenance strongly patrician, both in feature, profile, and expression; and an appearance remarkably distinguished: few could approach him on any duty, or on any subject requiring his serious attention, without being sensible

of a something strange and penetrating in his clear light eye. Nothing could be more simple or straightforward than the matter of what he uttered; nor did he ever in his life affect any peculiarity or pomp of manner, or rise to any coarse, weak, loudness in his tone of voice: it was not thus that he gave expression to excited feelings. He was also a man temperate in all his habits; using the table, but above its pleasures; and it is not to be found on record that he was ever *the slave* of any of those *frailties*, without an occasional subjection to which few men pass the fiery ordeal of a soldier's life."

A month or two before his marriage, Wellesley had been returned to Parliament for the borough of Rye; and his experience in Indian affairs rendered him a useful and efficient member of the House of Commons. His sturdy defence of his illustrious brother, the Earl of Mornington, who had been violently attacked by a crack-brained legislator of the name of Paull, during the autumn session of Parliament (1806), brought into strong relief a very agreeable side of his character; and it is satisfactory to learn that the foolish charges of Paull and his confederates received their quietus by a vote of thanks to the Earl, which was carried by a majority of 151.

In the summer of 1807 Sir Arthur Wellesley once more embarked on foreign service, in an expedition under the command of Lord Cathcart, destined to

Copenhagen, the object of which was the seizure of the Danish fleet, to prevent it from falling, as it would otherwise inevitably have done, into the hands of Napoleon Buonaparte. Our army and navy alike came off with distinction in this expedition; but it is not with our naval operations, so well conducted by Admiral Gambier, that we have here to do. The business of this biography is with the army alone. On the 29th of August Sir Arthur Wellesley's division attacked the Danish troops at Kioge, carried their works, entered the town, and captured nearly 1500 prisoners. The bombardment of Copenhagen brought the Danish Government to terms; and articles of capitulation were drawn up, which were agreed to on the 7th of September. In accordance with these articles, the Danish fleet was delivered up to the British Government, to be kept in pledge until the conclusion of a general peace. By the 20th of October our troops were all re-embarked, and the expedition was on its way back to England. Four months later Sir Arthur Wellesley received the thanks of Parliament for his important services in Denmark.

And now another and a larger field was to be opened for the display of the valour and genius of "the greatest Captain of the Age." On the 14th of June, 1808, Sir Arthur Wellesley, recently promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, was appointed by

the Duke of York to command a considerable force, which had been collected at Cork in the previous spring, on "a particular service." The specific object of this service was detailed to Wellesley a fortnight later; namely, to assist the people and armies of the Peninsula in repelling the perfidious and most unprincipled aggression of Napoleon.

The force thus placed under his command consisted of the Royal Artillery, Royal Staff Corps, the 4th Royal Veteran Battalion, ten battalions and four companies of infantry, and the 20th Light Dragoons, from England; a division of 4500 men under General Spencer had already arrived on the south coast of Spain. The Staff was comprised of Major-General Spencer, Major-General Hill, Major-General Ferguson, Brigadier-General Nightingall, Brigadier-General Fane, and Brigadier-General Craufurd. Should this force prove insufficient, a reinforcement of 10,000 men was to be despatched to Vigo to await Lieutenant-General Wellesley's direction. The armament sailed from Cove on the 12th of July, and reached Corunna, off the northern coast of Spain, on the 20th.

The state of Spain at this time was in every department ruinous. Its navy was annihilated; its army a mere rabble; its finances were at the lowest ebb; and public credit it had none. Its quarrel with England had swept the Spanish flag from the surface of the ocean—all was confusion and insolvency—and

exhibited unequivocal symptoms of the approaching dissolution of the monarchy. Nor was this the worst. French troops had the most complete possession of the country. Dupont had indeed been circumvented in the south;[1] but the other French generals had gained easy victories in the north, and a French force was immediately at hand which could sweep the Peninsula between the Pyrenees and Madrid. In Portugal, the French general, Junot, was holding Lisbon with 25,000 troops, and though his position just then (cut off from military communication with his colleagues in the Peninsula) was not an enviable one, he was still a power to be reckoned with.

Neither in Spain nor in Portugal were to be found that unity and intelligence which had been so desirable in a crisis of such gravity. All was doubt and uncertainty. Wellesley could neither ascertain on what amount of co-operation he might calculate, nor could he learn anything of the strength of the opposing force. Even at home, ministers themselves had had no definite plan when the expedition sailed, and their instructions were of the vaguest. Everything was left to the "judgment and decision" of the commanding officer "on the spot." Even the appointment of Sir Arthur to the command was only provisional. He was to surrender it to Sir Harry

[1] A body of 18,000 French troops, under Dupont, had just before laid down their arms to Spanish troops.

Burrard, who was in turn to give place to Sir Hugh Dalrymple; and in the form which the expedition afterwards assumed, no fewer than six general officers were placed over his head, into whose hands the conduct of the war might eventually have fallen.

On the first rumours of the British expedition, Junot sent General Loison with 7000 men to scour the country and "drive the English into the sea." Wellesley did not land his troops at Corunna, nor at any part of Spain; but proceeded south along the coast of Portugal as far as the Mondego, where he was informed for the first time that Sir Hugh Dalrymple had been appointed to the command. Upon hearing of his supersession, Sir Arthur showed, as might be expected, a magnanimity which was superior to all considerations of self-interest. Writing to Lord Castlereagh, he said—"All that I can say upon that subject is, that whether I am to command the army or not, or even to quit it, I shall do my best to insure its success; and you may depend upon it that I shall not hurry the operations, or commence them one moment sooner than they ought to be commenced, in order that I may acquire the credit of the success."

On the 1st of August (1808) the troopships anchored at the mouth of the Mondego, and the disembarkation was accomplished between the 2nd and the 5th, in rough weather. Having established

his headquarters at Laveos, Sir Arthur issued a proclamation to the Portuguese people, explaining the objects for which he had been sent to their assistance. On the 8th he was joined by the force under General Spencer; on the 9th he moved from his ground; and on the 10th was followed by the main body of his army, which now consisted of 12,300 men.

His first serious encounter was with General Laborde, who, having been checkmated in his efforts to effect a juncture with Loison at Lairia, seventy miles north of Lisbon, had taken up a strong position at Roliça, about midway between the two places.

Never was a sweeter spot chosen for the scene of a murderous combat than that which the village of Roliça, and its surrounding landscape, presented at sunrise on the 17th of August. The place, with its adjacent hamlets, contained, it was computed, a population of nearly 300 families. The houses were neat and commodious, each surrounded by an enclosed garden, stocked with vines; while the country about the villages, studded thickly with olive grounds, ilex groves, and cork woods, exhibited all that rustic comfort which marks a contented and industrious peasantry. Upon a table-land immediately in front of Roliça, and overlooking the country for many miles, the French were strongly posted. Laborde had seized every advantage a position of immense

strength naturally presented, while the Sierra afforded a succession of posts on which he might easily fall back. His force was under 6000, but his position was a very strong one, and besides five pieces of cannon, 500 of his troops were cavalry.

The English army broke up from Caldas at day-break on the 19th of August, and forming three columns, advanced against the enemy's position. The right column, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Trant, received instructions to turn the enemy's left and penetrate into the mountains in his rear; the left, commanded by Major-General Ferguson, was ordered to ascend the mountain ridge on the eastern side of the valley, and turn the right of the French position; while the centre column, the strongest of the three, was destined to attack the enemy in front. The advance displayed the high discipline of Wellesley's little army, and formed a splendid opening to the great Peninsular War; demonstrating to the French that the island-soldiers to whom they were opposed were men in everything their equals, and in unflinching gallantry their evident superiors.

The three leagues which lay between Caldas and Roliça were covered in orderly silence, and the morning was considerably advanced before the troops arrived within musket-shot of the French outposts. At last, however, the enemy's line became visible, and in a few minutes afterwards the skirmishers were

engaged. The centre division now moved into columns of battalions; that on the left pressed on with a quick pace, whilst the riflemen on the right drove in, with great gallantry, and in rapid style, the tirailleurs opposed to them.

Laborde's first position soon became untenable; his rear was endangered; and, without a moment's indecision, he fell further back, and occupied the mountain passes. Nothing could be stronger than this second position. "The way by which the assailants had to ascend," says Southey, "was up ravines rather than paths, more practicable for goats than men; so steep, that in many parts a slip of the foot would have been fatal; in some parts overgrown with briars, and in others impeded by fragments of rock."

Of these ravines the centre was the most practicable; and the 29th and 9th regiments advanced to storm it, protected by the fire of the British guns; while a cloud of skirmishers vanished among rocks and copse-wood, connecting the advance of the different columns, and feeling or forcing their way through obstacles that a vigorous defence had rendered almost insurmountable. Gradually, the scene became more animated as, on each of the several points of attack, the assailants and the assailed became warmly engaged. The spattering fusillade of the light troops was lost in the rolling volleys of the columns, which, with the deeper boom of cannon, echoed loudly

through the mountains. The hollow watercourses, behind which the British had attacked, hid for a time the combatants from view: but the smoke wreathing over the ravines showed by its density the place where the work of death went fastest on. On the left, Laborde gradually lost ground; but on the right his exertions were redoubled, in the desperate hope that Loison might yet come up, and thus retrieve the fortune of the day. Here, of course, the struggle became bloodiest. While the flank movements of Trant and Ferguson had not yet proved themselves successful, the 9th and 29th regiments forced their respective passes, and gained the plateau of the hill. They reached the summit out of breath, their ranks disordered, and their formation requiring a few minutes to correct. At that moment a fine battalion of Laborde's came boldly forward, delivered a shattering volley, and broke through the centre of the British regiment. But the 29th, though broken, were not beaten; and the 9th came to their assistance. The officers discharged their duties nobly, and the men fought, and formed, and held their ground with desperate obstinacy, until Ferguson won the right flank of the position. Then, aware that the chance of support was hopeless, Laborde retreated in excellent order, covering the regressive movement of his battalions by repeated charges of his cavalry.

Even when forced from the heights, however, the

French General attempted to take a new position and hold the village of Zambugeira; but he was driven back with the loss of three guns, and retreating through the pass of Runa, he gained Montechique next day. Wellesley's maiden field in Europe had cost him only 500 men, against 700 on the side of the enemy; but considering the small number of troops actually engaged (less than 5000), it will be seen that the contest was a well-contested and sanguinary one. In point of fact, Roliça is worthy to be the name first engraven on the long scroll of victories of which it gave such glorious promise.

The arrival of reinforcements under Generals Anstruther and Acland on the 19th and 20th brought up Wellesley's force to 16,000 men and 18 pieces of artillery; and he determined on an immediate advance towards Lisbon, forcing a battle with Marshal Junot on the way. But Sir Harry Burrard, who had now been appointed by the Government over the head of Wellesley, most unfortunately arrived on the evening of the 20th, and without quitting his ship, or troubling himself to examine the position of the British army or of the enemy, to Sir Arthur's great annoyance immediately countermanded the dispositions which he had made, and gave orders to suspend all offensive operations. Wellesley warned him that if he did not attack the French, the French would attack him; but the warning fell upon listless ears. Sir Harry appeared

to have formed a stubborn resolution of remaining quiet, and his obstinacy was not to be overcome by argument or remonstrance. The warning was verified on the following day, when Junot came down from his position and gave battle to the British at Vimiero, a pretty village, in a lovely and peaceful valley, through which the river Maceira winds pleasantly. The enemy came on in large bodies of cavalry, and Wellesley received them in line. The British right was furiously attacked. Unchecked by the light troops covering the line, the French came boldly forward, until they found themselves directly in front of the 36th, 40th, and 71st. They deployed instantly, and several volleys of musketry were mutually returned, —at a distance so close as to render the effect murderous. But the fusillade was ended quickly; the 82nd and 29th pushed forward, and joined their comrades when pressed by an enormous superiority. "Charge!" was the order; and a cheer, "loud, regular, and appalling," announced that England was coming on.

The French stood manfully; but though they waited the onset, they could not withstand it. They were driven from the field—attempted to rally—failed—and six guns were taken. Their front rank was literally annihilated, and lay as it had fallen—to tell with what determination it had stood, with what desperation it had been assaulted.

The attack on our left fared no better. As the result of a fearful cross fire from the British on the advancing column, the French got mobbed; and in that state were fairly driven for two miles from their ground by one regiment, until they were relieved by the French cavalry reserve, which came up in force not to be resisted. A third column, commanded by Laborde, which made a furious attempt to capture the village, was also repulsed: in fact, at every point the attack failed, and before the sun descended on the bloody field, the name "Vimiero" had been added to the scroll of Wellesley's victories.

Sir Harry Burrard landed after the battle commenced, but very prudently left the termination of the contest in the hands of him by whom the first dispositions had been made. Sir Harry was not in time to assist in the victory—but he had ample leisure to mar its results. Wellesley urged that this was the moment to advance, push on to Torres Vedras, place Junot between two fires, and oblige him to begin a retreat of immense difficulty by Alenquer and Villa Franca. All was admirably prepared for the movement; but the feeble General who was now at the head of the British forces protested that enough had been done, and positively prohibited any attempt of the kind.

On the following day he was succeeded by Sir Hew Dalrymple, an equally incapable commander;

but before Sir Hew could commence operations, the French General proposed an armistice preparatory to negotiating a capitulation, which was agreed to on terms preposterously favourable to the enemy. This was the unfortunate Convention of Cintra, against which public opinion in England was roused to almost insane fury. Wellesley, who had tried in vain to open the eyes of his superior officer to the real state of the French army, expressed his serious disapprobation of several parts of the Convention; but his advice was disregarded. Yet, strange to say, it was against him that the popular indignation was mainly directed. The soldiers, however, had formed a correct appreciation of his services, and the officers testified their admiration and respect for him by presenting him with a piece of plate valued at one thousand guineas.[1]

But it was clear that Wellesley could not continue to act with his new superiors, and returning to England, he resumed the duties of his Irish Secretaryship and his seat in Parliament.

[1] Rev. James Taylor, D.D.

CHAPTER IV

BARON DOURO AND VISCOUNT WELLINGTON OF TALAVERA

THE re-occupation of Spain by Napoleon, the re-establishment of his brother Joseph on the throne, the total overthrow of the Spanish armies, and the retreat of Sir John Moore to Corunna, speedily followed the return of Wellesley to England. The hard-fought battle of Corunna, in which the British gained the day but lost their heroic General, did not materially alter the position of affairs; indeed, even before the battle Sir John had decided on embarking the ruins of his army, and the cavalry and artillery had been some hours on board the transports when the fight began. At best it was but a melancholy triumph. The sad reverses of the retreat, the abandonment of the country, and the death of a brave and beloved commander, clouded the hour of conquest, and threw a depressing gloom around, that seemed fitter to mark a defeat than attend a well-won victory. When night fell, the embarkation was proceeded with, and on the after-

noon of the 17th of January, 1809, the whole fleet was under way, steering for England with a leading wind.

Whereupon it became evident that if the Peninsula were to be rescued from the grasp of the French, it would be well to turn once more to the distinguished soldier whom the Government had superseded in the very midst of his victories, and who was now peacefully discharging his duties as Chief Secretary for Ireland. So, by the unanimous voice of the Cabinet, Arthur Wellesley was appointed to the Command-in-Chief in the Peninsula; and Sir John Cradock, who was then filling the position, was compensated for his supersession by being made Governor of Gibraltar.

Sir Arthur set sail from Portsmouth on the 16th of April, 1809, in his Majesty's ship *Surveillante*, Captain Collier, and narrowly escaped shipwreck the same night. In striving to pass a bank which runs out from St. Catherine's Point, the ship missed stays several times, each failure bringing her nearer to the shore, until she approached so near that the breakers were close upon her bow. The wind, which had been blowing on the shore, however, suddenly changed, and further danger was averted. On the 22nd of the same month, the *Surveillante* anchored in the Tagus, and Sir Arthur was received at Lisbon with every demonstration of joy. The Regency at once appointed him Marshal-General of the armies of

Portugal, and invested him with authority to employ the Portuguese troops upon any operations in which he might think proper to engage.

At this juncture, the two French armies which menaced Portugal were—that of Marshal Soult, 24,000 strong at Oporto; and that of Marshal Victor, amounting since its junction with a force under General Lapisse, to about 30,000 men, in possession of the Guadiana; their headquarters being at Merida: but it must be added that the entire French force in the Peninsula exceeded 330,000 men, of whom 40,000 were cavalry. Of the Spanish armies the only one at hand to co-operate with the British force was that of Cuesta, consisting of about 30,000 men; but General Beresford had 6000 well-disciplined Portuguese troops under his command at Thomar, and thanks to the vigilance of that General, there were 15,000 more at Lisbon ready to take service with the British troops in the main army of the Commander-in-Chief.

Wellesley quitted Lisbon on the last day of April (1809), halted at Pombal on the 1st of May, and reached Coimbra on the 2nd, where the Allied forces were concentrated three days later. On the 7th, four divisions of the army commenced a northward march towards Oporto, a cavalry brigade, under General Cotton, leading. The movements were slowly executed, to allow Beresford, who had been com-

missioned to seize the bridge of Amarante, on the upper Douro, time to perform that undertaking; the seizure of the bridge being a necessary preliminary to the display of a British force in front of Oporto. Wellesley's various plans were ably effected by the officers in command of these divisions; and on the 9th of May Sir Arthur moved out of Coimbra, with the main body of his army. The following day there was a brisk engagement with the enemy at Grijon, where the advance-guard of Soult's army was discovered strongly posted. Their flank was turned and they were put to flight; and Soult, hearing of the repulse, moved the whole of his troops across the Douro, caused all the boats to be collected and secured on the northern side of the river, and destroyed the floating bridge.

The British General was now face to face with a serious difficulty. In order to act in concert with General Beresford he must cross with his army to the other side of the river, and how was this to be accomplished? The Douro, a rapid river, was 300 yards wide at this point, and the British troops were without boats. How were they to be got across? The difficulty was not an insurmountable one to Arthur Wellesley. Having observed a large unfinished building called the Seminary, encompassed by a high stone wall, on the opposite side of the river, a little to the right of the town (Oporto), it

struck him as affording a good defensible post, could only a small body of infantry be transported across to occupy it. Fortune unexpectedly befriended him. A barber of Oporto had eluded the vigilance of Soult's patrols, and had paddled his skiff to his humble dwelling on the south side of the river, where he was found in company with the Prior of Amarante; and the latter having volunteered his services, the barber consented to assist. With these unmilitary associates, the officer who had discovered the pair crossed the stream, and in half-an-hour returned unperceived with several large barges.

Seizing the boon which fortune offered, Sir Arthur instantly got twenty pieces of cannon placed in battery in the convent gardens, and dispatched General Murray, with the Germans, part of the 14th Light Dragoons, and two guns, to cross the river at Avintas, and descend by the opposite bank. There was no movement in the city which indicated that the enemy apprehended an attack—not a patrol had shown itself—and an ominous tranquillity bespoke a fatal confidence. A barge was reported ready to attempt a passage. "Let the men cross!" was the laconic order, and that order was promptly obeyed. An officer and 25 of the 3rd Regiment (Buffs) jumped on board, and in twelve minutes they had landed, unseen and unopposed.

A second boat effected its passage with similar

celerity, but the third was discovered by the enemy—and a scene which may be fancied but not described ensued. The rattle of the French drums, as they beat to arms, was nearly drowned in the outcries of the citizens who witnessed the daring effort, which they encouraged by their cheers, but which, unhappily, they wanted means to second. Disregarding order, in their anxiety to reach the threatened point, the French troops poured out of the city, their skirmishers hurrying on in double quick to arrest, if possible, the farther transit of the boats, and crush the troops already landed, before they could be supported from the other shore. The British artillery thundered from the convent garden, and the divisions of Paget, Hill, and Sherbrooke crowded the banks, gazing on a contest in which, for the present, they could take no share.

The Seminary was furiously assailed. On each side the number of the combatants increased, but on the French side in fourfold proportion. Presently the lower portion of the city was abandoned, and the inhabitants pushed boats over the river and brought the Guards across in large parties. Three battalions were already established in the Seminary. The detached corps, under Murray, were descried moving rapidly down the right bank of the Douro; and the assailants abandoned the attack and commenced a disorderly retreat. So complete and unexpected was

the surprise, that Wellesley at four o'clock quietly sat down to the dinner and table-service which had been prepared for Marshal Soult. This brilliant exploit was accomplished with a loss of only 23 killed and 98 wounded, while that of the enemy exceeded 500.

Soult made good his retreat into Galicia, and Sir Arthur, counting upon the co-operation of the Spanish General Cuesta, turned his attention to Marshal Victor's army, now increased to 53,000, which was concentrating on the Tagus. His plan was to march from Abrantes to Plasencia, seize the bridge of Almaraz, and thus cut off Victor's retreat in the direction of the capital ; but the dogged obstinacy of Cuesta (a worn-out, superannuated old man, physically unfit for the command of an army) defeated this well-devised plan. Being too weak to attack Victor alone, and finding, besides, great difficulties in subsisting his troops, Sir Arthur determined to march on Badajos the moment his money and stores should arrive. The British troops available at this time numbered 22,000, the Spanish—most of whom were raw recruits, deficient in all the means and appliances of war—38,000.

The first occasion on which Sir Arthur assumed actual command of the Allied forces was on the 27th of July, 1809, in the neighbourhood of Talavera da Rayna. Seeing that a battle was at hand, and that only in a strong position could the Spaniards be brought to

stand a shock, he prevailed upon Cuesta, with much difficulty, to withdraw from Alberche to Talavera, where there was ground suited for defence. Talavera stands on the northern bank of the Tagus, in New Castile, the houses reaching down to the water's edge. The Allied armies were drawn up in line; the British on the left, its extreme flank occupying a bold prominence near Alatuza de Segusella, and having in its front a difficult ravine, and on its flank a deep valley. To the Spaniards the right was assigned. Their battalions were stationed among olive groves, with walls and fences interspersed, and an embankment running along the road that formed an excellent breastwork, and rendered their position nearly unassailable. It was necessary to secure the point of junction where the British right touched Cuesta's left, and to effect this, the guns were placed in battery on the summit of a bold knoll, with an English division to protect them, and a strong cavalry corps in reserve. The height upon the left was the key of the position, and was entrusted to General Hill.

The battle commenced about noon on the 29th of July, almost before Wellesley had finished posting his troops, and was something of a surprise. The attack was made by two heavy French columns, which bore down upon a wood and convent held by General Mackenzie's division. So sudden and furious was the assault that the 87th and 88th regiments

were thrown into a momentary confusion; but the 31st, 45th, and 60th Rifles were immediately brought forward to cover their companions, who retired from the wood into the plain in beautiful order. The attack had now extended almost along the whole line, and it grew more and more animated as the evening began to fall. The left, where the British stood, was the grand object of the Marshals, who directed a strong force against it, forming their infantry into columns of battalions, which advanced at double quick, supported by a furious cannonade. Once, the brave fellows actually gained the height which was the key of the position, turning the left flank of General Donkin's brigade; but the success was only momentary, a close and murderous volley from a detachment led up by Hill in person, followed by a bayonet charge, drove the French from their position with great loss, and the ridge was recovered.

There was a brief space of quiet, but the French were determined to win the position, and, though darkness had now set in, they once more rushed forward in great force—the assailants and the assailed nearly touching each other in the gloom. The red flash of a well-delivered volley disclosed to the English the dark array that threatened them. The order was given to advance, and again the British bayonet drove the columns down the hill.

The next day fighting was resumed, the French

columns advancing again and again to the attack, but only to be repulsed with heavy loss after every effort. There was a temporary cessation of hostilities about noon, when the heat of the sun had become intolerable; and during this brief period of quiet the French and English fraternized with one another, going down to the same stream for water, and talking to each other from the opposite banks. But the bugles sounded, the drums beat to arms, and ten minutes later they were again at the bayonet's point.

Throughout the long afternoon the issues of the battle hung in the balance—at one time the British, and at another time the French, appearing to have the advantage. Among the memorable efforts of the day was the disastrous charge of Anson's light brigade of cavalry, who had been ordered to oppose the advance of some columns of French infantry. The ground between the approaching bodies of troops appeared to be a perfectly level plain, but the long and waving grass concealed a dangerous and narrow ravine, and before Colonel Elley, who was at the head of the cavalry, could give the much-needed warning, the line was on the verge of the stream. The enemy, forming into squares, now poured in a murderous fire; but instead of retreating, the survivors struggled through the watercourse, re-formed when they got to the other side, and passing the French

infantry at speed, fell with inexpressible fury on a brigade of chasseurs in the rear!

The final struggle in the desperate two-days battle centred on the British right, where General Sherbrooke's division was fiercely engaged. Under a storm of artillery, the French columns fairly came forward, as if they intended to leave the issue to "cold iron," but they never crossed a bayonet, were charged in turn, and repelled with serious loss. The Guards, however, carried forward by victorious excitement and advancing too far, found themselves assailed by the French reserve, and were mowed down by an overwhelming fire. They fell back; but as whole sections were swept away, their ranks became disordered, and nothing but their stubborn gallantry prevented a total *déroute*. Their situation was most critical: had the French cavalry charged home, nothing could have saved them. Wellesley saw the danger, and speedily dispatched support. A brigade of horse was ordered up, and the 48th moved from the heights we occupied to assist our hard-pressed comrades. They came on at double quick, and formed in the rear by companies, and through the intervals in our line the broken ranks of the Guards retreated. Our close and well-directed volley arrested the progress of the victorious French, while, with amazing celerity and coolness, the Guards rallied and re-formed, and in a few minutes advanced in turn to

support their succourers. As they came on, the men gave a loud huzza. An Irish regiment to the right answered it with a thrilling cheer. It was taken up from regiment to regiment, and passed along the English line; and that wild shout told the advancing enemy that British valour was indomitable. The leading files of the French halted—turned—fell back—and never made another effort.

This great victory, following so closely upon his splendid achievement at Oporto, brought new honours to Sir Arthur Wellesley from his grateful King and country. He was raised to the Peerage, by the titles of Baron Douro of Wellesley, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera, and of Wellington in the county of Somerset; and the thanks of Parliament were voted to him unanimously.

In spite of victory, however, the position of the British army had become exceedingly critical, as great masses of the enemy were gathering round it from various quarters. The approach of Soult; the loss of the important pass of Baños, after being held for nine hours with great bravery by Sir Robert Wilson and his Portuguese corps, against overwhelming odds; the obstinacy and infatuation of Cuesta; the imbecility of another Spanish General, Venegas; and the empty state of the military chest and of the commissariat, decided Wellesley to retreat again into Portugal. By a series of prompt and rapid

marches and well-arranged combinations, he fell back on Marida, Badajos, and Lisbon, and thus extricated his army from a position of imminent danger. He now determined to confine his attention to the protection of Lisbon—an object attended with enormous difficulties, though not of a character to daunt the masterful and fearless mind of Wellington.

But the return to Lisbon terminated the campaign of 1809, and the creation of the world-famed lines of Torres Vedras in front of the Portuguese capital must be treated in another chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS

IMPATIENT of the resistance which had been offered to his invasion of Spain, Napoleon determined to overwhelm it by numbers. By the latter end of 1809 the grand total of the French army within the provinces is said to have amounted to 365,000 men; and from the *élite* of this enormous force two grand armies were formed, each comprising three distinct corps. The first, which was entrusted to the Duke of Dalmatia (Marshal Soult), and was collected at the foot of the Sierra Morena, mustered 65,000 men, and was intended to overrun Andalusia; the second, confided to Marshal Massena, and concentrated in the valley of the Tagus, amounted to 80,000 effective soldiers, and was destined to reduce Ciudad Rodrigo in the first instance, and finally to expel the English from Portugal. The Marshals in command of the several corps were Soult, Victor, Mortier, Sebastiani, Ney, and Junot. Such was the position of affairs in

the Peninsula at the opening of the campaign of 1810.

The great plan conceived by Wellington was to draw the enemy farther and farther into Portugal in the direction of Lisbon, previously emptying the country of provisions, and then to retire within the impregnable lines of Torres Vedras, where supplies for his own army were abundant, and fresh troops in any numbers might be conveyed to him by sea. It was a mighty project, and was carried out in a spirit altogether worthy of its conception.

The peninsula on which Lisbon stands is traversed by two lofty heights, which stretch from the Tagus to the ocean, varying in altitude and abruptness, and running in a parallel direction, at a distance of from six to nine miles. Through the passes in these mountains run the four great roads that communicate between Lisbon and the interior. The whole of the ground is naturally strong, but minute examination satisfied Wellington that it might be rendered impregnable. He drew up, accordingly, for Lieutenant-Colonel Fletcher, his commanding engineer, a memorandum, bearing date October 20, 1809; in which, after assigning his reasons for defending Lisbon, he entered minutely into the subject of fortifying the lines of Torres Vedras; pointed out the best situations for forts and redoubts, and for the formation of entrenchments and inundations, and

the creation of such other obstructions to the attack of an enemy as the nature of the ground would admit of;—his object being to ascertain the amount of labour and length of time required for the execution of the stupendous works contemplated, including the necessary roads of communication. This magnificent conception, which was realized with extraordinary speed and ability by his engineers, has been regarded by military experts as the grandest production of Wellington's genius, and would alone suffice to stamp him as the first of commanders, either ancient or modern.

A detailed account of this stupendous work, the inauguration and progress of which were kept a profound secret from the French, is of course impossible here. The fortifications embraced three successive enclosures, which threw a vast shield in front of Lisbon to the north, stretching from the Tagus to the ocean. The first line had an extent of not less than thirty miles; the second twenty-four miles; and the third eight miles. In addition to the strengthening of these lines by powerful redoubts and quantities of artillery, rivers were obstructed in their course, flooding the valleys and rendering the country swampy and impassable; trenches were cut for the perfect protection of our troops and to facilitate their movements against the enemy; mountains were scarped; abattis of the most formidable description

either enclosed the entrance to ravines, impeded an approach to the works, or blocked up roads; routes conducting from the front were rendered impracticable; bridges were mined and prepared for explosion; signal-stations were erected at convenient places, and entrusted to seamen from the fleet in the Tagus; and lastly, in order to complete the palisades, planked bridges, etc., leading into the works, fifty thousand trees were placed at the disposal of the engineer department. The whole of these colossal works were finished in nine months.

The appointment of Marshal Massena to the command of the army in Portugal towards the end of April (1810) was the signal to commence hostilities; and the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the extreme south of the Spanish province of Leon, was made the first object of attack. The inferiority of Wellington's force rendered any attempt on his part to prevent the investment impossible, and by the 4th of June the town was in a state of siege. Built on a rising ground on the right bank of the Agueda, and defended by a well-built fortress and entrenchments, Rodrigo was not the kind of place to be taken without a struggle. With a garrison of 5000 men and a population of about the same extent, Andres Harrasti, the commandant, was prepared to hold out; and the defence which the old man made proved him every inch a soldier.

He found an able auxiliary in the guerilla chief, Julian Sanchez, who, having thrown himself into the place with a body of his followers, kept the besiegers in constant alarm during the progress of the investment, and occasioned them heavy loss. The guerillas were originally small bodies of Spaniards who, from various causes, had been compelled to fly from their homes and to take up arms against the French. "To lead these bands," says Major Sherer, "the priest girded up his black robe, and stuck pistols in his belt; the student threw aside his books, and grasped a sword; the shepherd forsook his flock; the husbandman his home." Inspired with an implacable hostility to their oppressors, these men were wont to issue from their places of refuge in the mountains whenever small detachments of the invader were known to be on the move; and falling upon the unwary foe, seldom gave him any quarter.

On the 28th of June, after battering the town with forty-six pieces of siege artillery for three days, Ney sent in a summons desiring Harrasti to choose "between an honourable capitulation and the terrible vengeance of a victorious army;" but the old governor returned a firm refusal. To succour the besieged was the object next to Wellington's heart; but the stern requirements of the plan upon which he was acting demanded that for once he should sink all chivalrous feelings—or, at least, not act upon them.

One march would have brought him to the city, and all expected that the attempt would be made; but he did not move. Massena, in his proclamations, taxed his opponent with timidity, and accused him of breach of honour and good faith in allowing his ally's fortress to fall "without risking a shot to save them." Nothing, however, could shake the determination of the English General. Stern in his purpose, Wellington remained inflexible; *and to his resolution not to risk the issues of a battle the downfall of Napoleon's dynasty may be traced.*

The fate of Rodrigo was sealed; but the city held out until the 11th of July, when the counterscarp having been blown in, and a breach formed over which carriages might have passed, Harrasti hoisted the white flag and surrendered. Massena had boasted that in three months he would drive the English into the sea, but the best part of that period had been spent before Rodrigo, and he had much to do in little time if he thought to give effect to his words. For nearly a month more he remained inactive on the banks of the Coa, a few miles west of the captured town; and then he commenced operations against Almeida, a regularly constructed fortress on the Coa, garrisoned by 4000 Portuguese. Meanwhile (August 4th) the British General had issued his memorable proclamation, calling upon the inhabitants of that portion of the country which it was not in his power to protect, to

evacuate their homes, to remove their goods, drive away their cattle, and destroy all stores and provisions they were unable to carry with them. It was further intimated that those who disregarded this order would be punished as traitors. As a result of this order, property was wasted or concealed, and shrine and cottage alike abandoned by their occupants — the peasant deserting the hearth where he had been nursed, the monk the altar where he had worshipped from boyhood. One portion of the wanderers proceeded to Lisbon, but the greater number sought a temporary retreat on the southern shores of the Tagus.

The siege of Almeida was a short affair owing to the explosion of the great powder magazine on the very first day. Hundreds of the inhabitants were killed and wounded, and the governor of the fortress, Colonel Cox, deprived of his ammunition, and betrayed by the lieutenant-governor, was compelled to capitulate. As the place had been well provided, it was expected to hold out for a considerable time, and its fall, following so rapidly the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, was a heavy blow to the British General-in-Chief. At Lisbon and Oporto it had the effect of creating a complete panic; and by the Whig party at home, who had been diligently abusing Wellington almost since the opening of the war, it was of course regarded as but "the beginning of the end" which they had so confidently predicted.

"All this," says Wellington, "would not much signify, if our staff and other officers would mind their business, instead of writing news and keeping coffee-houses. But, as soon as an accident happens, every man who can write, and who has a friend who can read, sits down to write his account of what he does not know, and his comments on what he does not understand; and these are diligently circulated and exaggerated by the idle and malicious, of whom there are plenty in all armies. The consequence is, that officers and whole regiments lose their reputation; a spirit of party, which is the bane of all armies, is engendered and fomented; a want of confidence ensues; and there is no character, however meritorious, and no action, however glorious, which can have justice done to it. I have hitherto been so fortunate as to keep down this spirit in this army, and I am determined to persevere."

The crisis of the campaign was now approaching. Massena's army was again in motion, and as the French Marshal advanced, Wellington slowly retired to his inaccessible stronghold; but for the purpose of inspiriting his men, and perhaps to show to the world that his retreat proceeded neither from weakness nor fear, he deliberately halted at Busaco, and posting his troops with great judgment on the backward slope of the sierra,[1] offered battle. The strength of

[1] The Sierra de Busaco.

his position, and his being enabled to employ artillery with terrible effect, gave to the British General an advantage of which he amply availed himself. His army only numbered 25,000 men, as against the French 70,000; but the British were splendidly placed.

The French attack was made in five columns, and on two distinct points about a league apart from each other, but they were repulsed at all points. A Portuguese regiment was indeed thrown into disorder, and the crest of a ridge between Picton's and Keith's divisions was gained for a moment; but before the enemy could secure the height with their advanced battalions, the place had been swept by the British guns, and the 45th and 88th were forcing the shattered column down the hill.

The divisions thus repulsed had been bravely commanded by General Reynier; the efforts of Marshal Ney to establish a footing on the ridge were not more successful. The brigade of General Simon led the attack; and, reckless of the constant fusillade of the British light troops, and the incessant fire of the artillery, which literally ploughed through the advancing column from its leading to its last section, the enemy came steadily and quickly on. The British artillerymen worked their guns with amazing rapidity —delivering round after round with such beautiful precision, that the wonder was how any body of men

could advance under such a withering and incessant cannonade. But nothing could surpass the gallantry of the assailants. On they came, and in a few moments their skirmishers, "breathless, and begrimed with powder," gained the ridge of the sierra. The British guns were instantly retired—the French cheers arose—and, in another second, their column topped the height. General Craufurd, who had coolly watched the progress of the advance, called on the 43rd and 52nd to "Charge!" A cheer that pealed for miles over the sierra answered the order, and "eighteen hundred British bayonets went sparkling over the brow of the hill." The head of the French column was overwhelmed in an instant; "both its flanks were lapped over by the English wings," while volley after volley, at a few yards' distance, completed its destruction, and marked with hundreds of its dead and dying, all down the face of the sierra, the course of its murderous discomfiture. Some of the light troops continued slaughtering the broken columns nearly to the bottom of the hill, until Ney's guns opened from the opposite side, and covered the escape of the relics of Simon's division.

Another brigade, under General Marchand, advancing to action about this time, never got beyond the cover of a wood half-way up the sierra, being held firmly in check by a Portuguese regiment under Colonel Pack, while General Crauford turned a search-

ing fire from his guns upon their flank. This was practically the conclusion of the battle; though some French troops persisted in holding a village within pistol-shot of the Light Division, and were not satisfied until Crauford had killed one half of them and expelled the rest. Six thousand of the French troops had been put *hors de combat* in the engagement, while the casualties of the Allies amounted to 1269.

Massena made no attempt to renew his attack on Busaco, and Wellington continued his retreat. He was satisfied that his lines at Torres Vedras would effect all that they were designed to effect, and that the further the French were drawn into the country the more disastrous would be their retreat. "My opinion," he said, in a letter to his brother, the Marquis of Wellesley, "is that the French are in a scrape. They are not sufficient for their purpose, and they will find their retreat from this country a most difficult and dangerous operation."

On the 8th of October the Allies entered the lines of Torres Vedras; and Massena, hoping now to intercept the passage of the British troops to the sea, pressed eagerly forward. An easy success and rich reward appeared to be within his grasp. His surprise and disappointment, therefore, may be conceived when, on the 10th of October, after his advanced guard had driven the Allies from Sobral, his eye rested on the mighty and impregnable fortress which

barred his further advance; and he ascertained the stupendous fact that a strong defensive position, thirty miles in extent, flanked by the Tagus on its right, and the Atlantic on its left, and armed with perfect military science, with lavish expense and incredible labour, spread its menacing front before him. Having reconnoitred the lines, he disposed his three corps in bivouac, and sat down before them.

It was all that he could do. Had Napoleon himself been there he could have done no more. Arrested in his threatened operation of driving the English into the sea, the Marshal could only chafe and fume in front of the impregnable lines—

"Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike."

Six hundred pieces of cannon confronted him, and he was powerless. After a time he began to despair of being allowed to plant the imperial eagles on the towers of Lisbon, and to wish for more ordinary acquisitions for the subsistence of his starving troops. Provisions were every day becoming more scarce, and Trant and Wilson were both harassing his rear with increasing activity. The country, which he had covered with his bivouacs, and ravaged by his foragers, was exhausted; sickness had broken out in his ranks, and discontent and dissension among his officers. Whilst Wellington's troops were enjoying health and abundance within the lines, the army of

Massena was reduced to great extremities, and was at length compelled to commence a retreat.

Thus everything had fallen out as the great commander had predicted; and the dismal prophecies of the discontented abroad and the croakers at home were entirely falsified. It was now Wellington's turn to act upon the offensive.

CHAPTER VI

CIUDAD RODRIGO, BADAJOS, AND SALAMANCA

WITH greatly diminished forces Massena effected a masterly retreat to Santarem, which he occupied throughout the remainder of the winter. About the beginning of March 1811 he recommenced his retrograde movement; and though pressed and harassed by the British, made good his retreat to the Portuguese frontier. Wellington availed himself of the opportunity to invest the fortress of Almeida, one of the keys of Portugal. Anxious to preserve this important place, Massena wheeled round on the foe with his whole force, and on the 5th made a vigorous attack upon the British at Fuentes d'Oñoro, a village about ten miles west of Ciudad Rodrigo.

On the 3rd of May the French were expelled, but on the 5th the attack was repeated with great fury. "It was defended in the most determined manner by the 71st, 24th, and 79th. About two o'clock, however, these regiments began to give way, and fell back on

more defensible ground in the rear of the village; where at this moment the 88th, under Colonel Wallace, and led on by Major-General Mackinnon, was ordered to move up and support them. This was done in admirable order; and they made so overwhelming a charge through the streets, that they drove the enemy from the village with immense loss."[1] In fact, so brilliant and decisive was the charge, that the French never ventured to enter the streets again.

But though Massena failed to relieve Almeida, and the British obtained possession of the place, the garrison contrived to escape, having previously dismantled the works, spiked the guns, and destroyed the ammunition. Their retreat was admirably planned and bravely executed, the credit of the undertaking belonging to the French governor, Brennier, who acted under the instructions of Massena. The retreat took place during the night of the 10th, when Brennier assembled his officers, communicated the Marshal's instructions, and then issued his own. The soldiers were ordered to quit the town at ten o'clock—march in profound silence—and no matter what circumstances should occur, they were directed to receive the fire of the besiegers without returning a shot. Brennier calculated that by daylight they should reach the bridge of Barba del Puerco; but if delayed by accident, or attacked in force, the way was to be opened with the

[1] General Picton.

bayonet. The night-march was pointed out from the ramparts, and at eleven o'clock, under cover of an immense explosion, the brave band left the ruined fortress, and guided by the stars, pushed boldly for the French lines. Bayoneting the pickets that opposed them, the column hurried on, and reached the river before a single shot was fired. Here they halted for their stragglers to come up, and the delay gave time for some of the British to overtake them; with the result that, while they were in the act of crossing the bridge, the 2nd, 4th, and 36th opened a murderous fire, by which the gallant column lost one hundred men. Two hundred men and ten officers were captured by some squadrons of the Royals; but the rest got quite clear and found their way to the French camp. Massena soon after resigned his command, and Marshal Marmont was appointed his successor.

The first investment of Badajos by Beresford and the thrilling battle of Albuera hardly fall within the scope of this biography. The latter event took place on the 16th, but Wellington received no account of it till the 19th, when he arrived at Elvas, accompanied by a part of his staff, and travelling without baggage or impedimenta of any description. Albuera was one of the most obstinate and sanguinary actions in which British troops had ever been engaged, and though both sides claimed the victory, the title rested

indubitably with the Allies. With his force of 30,000 men, a motley of three nations, Beresford drove from the field 24,000 of the very *élite* of Napoleon's army, under the command of Marshal Soult. The brunt of the action was borne by the English, who had only 1500 unwounded men left, "the remnant of 6000 unconquerable British soldiers!" At one memorable moment of the battle, when the British were almost overwhelmed, and orders were actually being issued to commence a retreat, Colonel Hardinge saw that the battle might yet be won; and without waiting for Beresford's permission, he ordered the 4th division and a brigade of the 2nd to advance, and thus redeemed the fortunes of the day.

After this hard-won battle Wellington made two assaults on Badajos, which failed from the want of proper materials; but though he was obliged to raise the siege and return to the northern frontier of Portugal, he did not abandon his resolution to obtain possession of this indispensable stronghold. Alternately the key of Spain and Portugal, it was not a place to be left alone. For the present, however, he turned his attention further north, and Ciudad Rodrigo, upon which Wellington had been long contemplating an attack, became once more a centre of operations. At the beginning of 1812 preparations were begun for a close blockade; and these preparations were proceeding, when intelligence was received which induced

Wellington to alter his plans. Marmont was collecting his detached divisions, and his avowed object being the relief of the place, the British General determined to prevent it by storming Rodrigo—"in other words," to quote the luminous language of Napier, "to overstep the rules of science, and sacrifice life rather than time; for such was the capricious nature of the Agueda, that in one night a flood might enable a small French force to relieve the place."

Ground was broken on the 8th of January; and from that day to the 19th, with the usual incidents that attend a siege, the besiegers continued to breach, and the garrison to offer the boldest and most scientific opposition. A personal examination of the breaches then convinced Lord Wellington that the assault might be given with success; and directing the fire of the breaching batteries to be turned against the guns upon the ramparts, he seated himself upon the reverse of an advanced approach, and wrote out an order of assault to be made at seven o'clock that night. The coolness with which, in this situation, undisturbed by the roar of his own artillery, or the responding thunder from the batteries of the fortress, he penned the plan of the assault, was, indeed, characteristic of the man. That memorandum sealed the fate of Ciudad Rodrigo.

The day wore slowly away; darkness came on,

and with it the order to "stand to arms." The evening was calm and tranquil, and the moon, in her first quarter, shed on the scene a feeble light, which, without disclosing the shape or form of particular objects, rendered their rude outline distinctly visible. There stood the fortress, a confused mass of masonry, with its breaches like shadows cast upon the wall. Not a gun was fired from it, and all within was as still and motionless as if it were already a ruin, or its inhabitants were buried in sleep. On the side of the Allies, the trenches crowded with armed men, among whom not so much as a whisper might be heard, presented no unapt resemblance to a dark thunder-cloud, or to a volcano in that state of tremendous quiet which usually precedes its most violent eruptions.[1]

The bell from the tower of the cathedral tolled seven; and in obedience to previous orders, the troops marched rapidly but silently to the assault. No piece of clockwork, however nicely arranged, could obey the will of its maker more accurately than the different columns obeyed that night the wishes of their chief. For a few moments, the heavy tramp of many men, put simultaneously into motion, alone broke upon the solemn stillness of the evening. But, suddenly, a shout upon the right of the line nearest the bridge was heard: it was taken up along the whole

[1] Lord Londonderry's *Narrative*.

line of attack—a spattering of musketry sounded—the storming parties rushed forward to the breaches,—every gun upon the ramparts that would bear opened with one tremendous crash, and told that the garrison were prepared for the assault and ready to repel it.

"General M'Kinnon's brigade instantly pushed up the main breach, in conjunction with the 5th and 94th regiments, which arrived at the same moment along the ditch from their right. The men mounted in a most gallant manner against an equally gallant resistance; and it was not till after a sharp struggle of some minutes that the bayonets of the assailants prevailed, and gained them a footing on the summit of the rampart. The defenders then concentrated behind the retrenchment, which they obstinately maintained, and a second severe struggle commenced."[1] The lesser breach was, at the same time, assaulted with equal intrepidity, but more decided success. The darkness of the ditch occasioned a momentary confusion, which the fall of the leading officers increased; while the ardour of the light troops brought so many to the breach, that they choked its narrow aperture with their numbers. For a moment the assailants recoiled, but it was only to return more resolutely to the onset. A cheer was heard above the thunder of artillery,—up rushed the stormers,—the breach was gained,—the

[1] Jones's *Journal of Sieges.*

supporting regiments mounted in sections, formed on the rampart, the 52nd wheeling to the left, the 43rd to the right,—and that success alone would have decided the fate of Rodrigo.

A sham attack by the Portuguese, under General Pack, had been equally effective. They carried by escalade a small redan in front of the St. Jago Gate, and materially assisted in distracting the attention of the garrison by the alarm their movement had caused.

Thus terminated the ever-memorable siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. The rapid reduction of the fortress was unparalleled in modern war, and its fall was so unexpected that Marmont's efforts to relieve it were scarcely conceived and commenced, before the tidings of that event reached him. "By no possibility can the siege be brought to a successful issue in less than four-and-twenty days," was the conviction of every expert: Wellington had carried it by assault in eleven days! Honours rained in upon the victorious Captain as the reward of this brilliant achievement. By the Spaniards he was created Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo; by the Portuguese, Marquis of Torres Vedras; at home he was raised to the earldom of Wellington, with an increased annuity of £2000 a year; and the thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to him unanimously.

Before another week had elapsed, Wellington was

arranging with his commanding engineer the preliminaries for besieging Badajos; but it was not till the 7th of April that the place was carried by storm. The defences had been greatly improved and strengthened since the former siege. Scarps had been heightened, outworks strongly finished, and a portion of the *enceinte* was covered by an impassable inundation. The French General Philippon had also put the castle in so complete a state of defence, that a regular attack upon it was out of the question. The British army had no miners; their sappers were without experience; no mortars were to be had, and there was a very inadequate proportion of guns for the siege of a fortress so well armed and well provided. Nor was there time for the patient process of a regular siege; and as the walls of Badajos could not, like those of Rodrigo, be breached from a distance, Wellington determined by a bold effort to make himself master of a detached fort called the Picurina, from whose site the escarp of one front could be seen low enough to be breached with effect.

During the night of the 17th, which was wet and stormy, the British General broke ground in front of the Picurina within 160 yards of the fort. The tempestuous state of the weather favoured the operations for a time; but on the second day the strongly-reinforced garrison kept up an incessant fire of musketry on the labourers, assisted by occasional

discharges from field-pieces and howitzers. The next day, 1500 of the garrison, under General Vielland, made a spirited sortie from the town by the Talavera Gate, and with 100 from the Picurina, fell suddenly on the working party, and drove them from the trench in great confusion. Being almost immediately rallied by their officers, however, they in turn charged the French, and vigorously repulsed them.

On the 22nd the state of the weather was such as to threaten a total stop to the operations. An unusual rise of the Guadiana had swept away the pontoon bridge; the flying bridge could not be worked, and the passage of all supplies was completely suspended. In addition to these casualties, the trenches were always full of water: and the earth thrown up, retaining no shape, was speedily washed down again. Half the day was consumed in emptying the trenches of rain-water; and the bottom became so muddy, that it was found necessary to have it artificially renewed by a layer of sand-bags and fascines. These obstacles, however, served but to stimulate Lord Wellington to even severer exertions. By immense labour, the bridge over the Guadiana was restored, and the breaching batteries fully armed by the 24th.

On the 25th, after our guns had opened fire, and had pounded away for some hours without much effect, Wellington, as time was growing precious, ordered the fort to be stormed the same night. The

direction of the assaulting party was given to Major-General Kempt, who commanded in the trenches; and it consisted of 500 men. The attack was made at ten o'clock, and was as hard a bit of fighting as could be desired. In the very midst of the struggle, an alarm was raised that a large body of the besieged had sallied from the town to relieve the fort, and the troops were about to abandon these advantages, and quit a place their bravery had already won, when General Kempt dispelled the panic, led them forward, and attacked the garrison again, who fought to the very last; and, with the exception of some 70, perished while desperately resisting. The taking of the Picurina was gallantly effected, but it cost the British dear—the casualties in killed and wounded being 19 officers and upwards of 300 men.

At noon on the 5th of April the breaches were reconnoitred and declared practicable, and ten o'clock on the night of the 6th was appointed for the assault. The anxious day dawned and passed, and the sun went down in a sky that was dark and threatening. Twilight came—the batteries ceased firing—darkness fell—and the trenches, though crowded with armed men, remained unusually quiet. Lights were seen occasionally flitting backward and forward through the fortress, and the "All's well" of the French sentinels was distinctly heard. While waiting in readiness for the assault, the deep gloom which

hitherto had shrouded the beleaguered city was suddenly dissipated by a flight of fireworks, which rose over the town, and displayed every object around it.

The word was given to advance, and the 4th and light divisions issued from the trenches. "At that moment the deep bell of the cathedral of St. John struck ten; an unusual silence reigned around, and except the softened footsteps of the storming parties, as they fell upon the turf with military precision, not a movement was audible. A terrible suspense—a horrible stillness—darkness—a compression of the breathing—the dull and ill-defined outline of the town—the knowledge that similar and simultaneous movements were making on other points — the certainty that two or three minutes would probably involve the forlorn hope in ruin, or make it a beacon-light to conquest;—all these made the heart throb quicker, and long for the bursting of the storm, when victory should crown daring with success, or hope and life should end together."

On went the storming parties; and one solitary musket was discharged beside the breach, but none answered it. The ditch was gained—the ladders were lowered—on rushed "the forlorn hope," with the storming party close behind them. The divisions were now on the brink of the sheer descent, when a gun boomed from the parapet. The earth trembled

—a mine was fired—an explosion—and an infernal hissing from lighted fuses succeeded—and, like the rising of a curtain on the stage, in the hellish glare that suddenly burst out around the breaches, the French, lining the ramparts in crowds, and the British descending the ditch, were placed as distinctly visible to each other as if the hour were noontide!

The explosion nearly annihilated the forlorn hope, and the heads of the storming party. For a moment, astounded by the deafening noise, the supporting troops held back; but, as if by a general impulse, some rushed down the ladders which had been lowered to the bottom of the ditch, others leaped boldly in, reckless of the depth of the descent; and while some mistook the face of an unfinished ravelin for the breach, which on gaining was found to be entirely separated from the ramparts, the rest struggled desperately up the breach, only to encounter at the summit a range of sword-blades, framed in beams too massive to be cut through, and secured by iron chains beyond the power of removal.

In this fearful situation the courage of the assailants assumed a desperation that appears almost incredible: officers and men in fast succession gained the summit, only to be shot down; and many perished in vain attempts to force an impassable barrier of bristling sword-blades. "The garrison never appeared intimidated, nor to lose their decision

and coolness for a moment on any point; for whilst some were repelling the assailants with their bayonets from the summits of the breaches, others continued to roll down, with the greatest precision and effect, shells and fire-barrels on the men in the ditch below, and their tirailleurs unceasingly fired with accuracy and steadiness from cuts in the parapets between the points of contention."[1]

"Similar gallant efforts to those above described were frequently repeated to carry the breaches, but the combustibles prepared by the garrison seemed inexhaustible. Each time the assailants were opposed by appalling and destructive explosions, and each time were driven down with a great loss of officers and of the bravest soldiers. After several efforts, the remaining men, discouraged by such constant repulses, could not be prevailed upon to make a further effort. Their situation in the ditch of a front, with an incessant fire upon them from the parapets, was most trying; still not an individual attempted to withdraw—they remained patiently to be slaughtered, though far too discouraged to make a fresh attempt to extricate themselves by forcing the breaches."[2]

But at other points bravery obtained success, and Badajos was already carried. The 3rd division

[1] Napier.

[2] Jones's *Journal of Sieges.*

crossed the Rivillas, surmounted the castle-hill, and, under a tremendous fire, planted their ladders. Some of the boldest gained the parapet, but they were hurled back to destruction; and a fresh attempt had to be made by fresh assailants. This second attempt was successful: the brave fellows swarmed up,—a firm footing was gained,—and the bayonet did the rest. The French retired in despair, and the castle remained in possession of the "fighting 3rd."

Prior to the assault, Lord Wellington had stationed himself on the left of the Calemon, as the best point from which he could issue future orders for the conduct of the attack. It was an anxious time for him. The wounded came fast to the rear, but they could tell little how matters were progressing. At last a mounted officer rode up. He was the bearer of evil tidings: the attack upon the breaches had failed—the majority of the officers had fallen—the men, left without leaders to direct them, were straggling about the ditch, and unless instant assistance was sent, the assault must fail entirely. Pale, but thoroughly undisturbed, the British General heard the disastrous communication, and issued orders to send forward a fresh brigade (Hay's) to the breaches. Half-an-hour passed, and another officer appeared. He came from Picton to say the castle had been carried by escalade, and that the 3rd division were safe within the town. Lord Wellington instantly transmitted orders to hold

the castle till the morning, and then blowing down the gates, to sally if necessary, and support a fresh assault. No farther attempt to gain the breaches was required, and an officer was dispatched to withdraw the columns, which was effected about midnight.

The intelligence of the capture of the castle at once occasioned an abandonment of the breaches, and the governor, with part of the garrison, retired to San Christoval, where they surrendered on the first summons in the morning. At daybreak the remnant of the 4th and light divisions entered the breaches unopposed: the siege of Badajos was at an end.

Our losses were enormous — 5000 killed and wounded, among whom were five generals: but another fortress of first-rate importance had been wrested from the grasp of the invaders, and the results were full of glory to the British arms. "When," says Napier, "the extent of the night's havoc was made known to Lord Wellington, the firmness of his nature gave way for a moment, and the pride of conquest yielded to a passionate burst of grief for the loss of his gallant soldiers." During the siege, 2523 barrels of powder, each containing 90 pounds; 31,861 round-shots; 1826 common and spherical 5½-inch shells; and 1659 rounds of grape and case-shot were expended. The reduction of Badajos required 70,000 sand-bags; 1200 gabions; 700 fascines; and 1570 entrenching tools.

Before quitting the neighbourhood of Badajos, Wellington repaired the fortifications, and left Sir Roland Hill with 12,000 men in Estremadura to watch the Andalusian frontier. As the victorious general advanced, Marmont retired; and the head-quarters of the Allied army being established at Fuente Guinaldo, cantonments were selected for the troops between the Coa and the Agueda, where they enjoyed an interval of much-needed rest.

Being now at the head of the finest army he had ever commanded, Wellington decided on assuming the offensive, and marching against Marmont. As a preliminary measure, Sir Roland Hill was instructed to attempt the difficult and hazardous task of destroying the boat-bridge at Almaraz, which afforded a safe and easy communication between Marmont and Soult. Hill was one of Wellington's ablest lieutenants, and on this occasion proved himself to be worthy of the important trust committed to him. Besides destroying the bridge and forts defending it, he inflicted a severe loss on the enemy in killed and drowned, and captured 260 prisoners, among whom were the governor of Almaraz and sixteen officers. The issue of the enterprise gave unfeigned satisfaction to the army; while it astounded both Soult and Marmont to find piles of ruin where they had left well-constructed forts, and

an impassable river between their forces and the garrison of the castle of Mirabate.

The movements of our troops—on this as in many another enterprise during the Peninsular War—were doubtless greatly influenced and accelerated by the information of the enemy's whereabouts and tactics which was brought continually to the British lines by willing agents. Through the correspondence intercepted by the guerillas, Wellington constantly obtained the most valuable information. This was generally contained in letters from the French generals themselves, intended to direct the movements of their colleagues. Although their dispatches were written in cipher, the Allied leader generally contrived to find out the key which unveiled their contents; and his own secret espionage was even more extensive than the enemy's. "He had," says Napier, "a number of spies amongst the Spaniards who were living within the French lines; a British officer in disguise constantly visited the French armies in the field; a Spanish state-councillor, living at the headquarters of the first corps, gave intelligence from that side; and a guitar-player of celebrity, named Fuentes, repeatedly making his way to Madrid, brought advice from thence. A Mr. Stuart, under cover of vessels licensed to fetch corn from France, kept *chasse-marées* constantly plying along the Biscay coast, by which he not only acquired direct informa-

tion, but facilitated the transmission of intelligence from the land spies, amongst whom the most remarkable was a cobbler, living in a little hutch at the end of the bridge of Irun. This man, while plying his trade, continued for years, without being suspected, to count every French soldier that passed in or out of Spain by that passage, and transmitted their numbers by the *chasse-marées* to Lisbon."

Having secured a communication for his army across the Tagus, and collected and stored a month's provisions at Rodrigo for the whole of the troops, Wellington suddenly broke up cantonments, passed the Agueda on the 13th of June, and on the 17th entered the important city of Salamanca, where he was received with unbounded enthusiasm by the populace.

Salamanca stands in a commanding situation on the right bank of the Tormes, a river of considerable magnitude there, which rises near the Sierra de Tablada in Old Castile, and falls into the Douro on the Portuguese frontier, opposite Bemposta. The country round is open, without trees, and with a few villages interspersed, in which the houses are constructed of clay. On the left of the river there are extensive pastures; on the right a wide and unenclosed corn country. The pastures are common, and the arable land occupied after a manner not usual in other parts of Spain: it is cultivated in annual

allotments, and reverts to the commonalty after the harvest. Salamanca had long served as a depôt for the army of Portugal. To protect the town, command the passage of the river, and overawe the inhabitants, three forts had been constructed by Marmont with materials obtained by the demolition of several convents and colleges.

Marmont retired as the Allies advanced; and Wellington now addressed himself to the task of reducing these forts, which were of very powerful construction, well garrisoned, and amply stored with provisions and ammunition. The accomplishment of the task occupied the British General till the end of June, and was the preliminary of a much more brilliant triumph. No sooner did Marmont ascertain the capture of the forts, than he withdrew the garrison from the neighbouring stronghold of Alba de Tormes, and retired upon the Douro. On the 2nd of July the cavalry of the Allies overtook his rear-guard near Tordesillas. The British line stretched from La Seca on the right to Pollos on its left. Headquarters had been established at Rueda, and the Douro flowed between the hostile armies. Wellington made several unsuccessful attempts to bring the French Marshal to action; but although he had received reinforcements which had increased his army to 40,000 men, he seemed to be in no haste to commence the struggle.

From the 3rd to the 15th of July the two armies

lay opposite to each other, watchful and inactive, with the exception of some slight alteration in their respective positions. Then, for a week, there were marches and countermarches, feints and evolutions, varied by occasional skirmishes with outposts. To reach a point was Marmont's object—to intercept him was that of Wellington. Nothing could surpass the French Marshal's beautiful manœuvring for consecutive days while moving round the British flank, except the countervailing rapidity with which his talented opponent defeated every effort to outflank him, and held the Marshal constantly in check. On the 22nd the armies came to close quarters, and a great battle was fought.

A tremendous thunderstorm raged during the night of the 21st, and the morning broke sullenly before the uproar ended; and with the first dawn the light troops of the enemy commenced skirmishing, while frequent movements of heavy columns, as they marched and countermarched, seemed rather calculated to confuse an opponent than effect a particular object. On one of two heights, named Arapiles, the Allied right was appuied, and the occupation of the other was attempted; but the French, with a similar design, had already detached troops, who succeeded in obtaining its possession. The day wore on,—the late tempest apparently had cleared the atmosphere,—all was bright and unclouded sunshine,—and over a wide

expanse of undulating landscape nothing obscured the range of sight but dust from the arid roads, or wreathing smoke occasioned by the spattering fire of the light troops. Marmont was busily manœuvring, and Lord Wellington coolly noticing from a height the dispositions of his opponent, which, as he properly calculated, would lead to a general engagement. At noon, from the rear of the Arapiles, Marmont made a demonstration, as if with design of attacking the Allied left. The movement brought Lord Wellington to the ground; but readily perceiving that it was but a feint of the French Marshal, he returned to his former position on the right. At two o'clock, finding his abler antagonist was not to be deceived, Marmont determined to outflank the right of the Allies, and interpose between them and the Rodrigo road; and in consequence commenced marching his columns by their left. It was a fatal movement.

At that moment Wellington was seated on the hill-side, eating his hurried meal, while an aide-de-camp in attendance watched the enemy's movements with a glass. The bustle then perceptible in the French line attracted his lordship's notice, and he quickly inquired the cause. "They are evidently in motion," was the reply. "Indeed! What are they doing?" "Extending rapidly to the left," was the answer. Wellington sprang upon his feet and seized the telescope; then muttering that Marmont's

good genius had deserted him, he mounted his horse and issued the orders to attack.

For seven hours the battle raged at different points with unabated fury; and it was not till darkness had fallen, and the loud cheering of the 6th division announced that the French were retiring from the Arapiles, that the hard-contested field was left in undisputed possession of the island conquerors. Seven thousand two hundred and sixty-four of the Allied troops had then fallen, of whom over 5000 were British—sufficient indication as to which section of the army the laurels of victory belonged. The French loss was never correctly ascertained; but two eagles, eleven pieces of cannon, 7000 prisoners, and as many dead left upon the field were the admitted trophies of British victory.

The inhabitants of Salamanca, who had watched the progress of the battle from the high grounds above the city with breathless interest, displayed the most enthusiastic joy at this total discomfiture of their oppressors, and did not limit their gratitude to the victors to mere words. Mules and cars laden with refreshment and other necessaries were dispatched to the camp, and hospitals were prepared for the reception of the wounded. High mass was celebrated in the cathedral, and the streets were filled with rejoicing promenaders of all orders. Wellington was present at the high mass, and is thus described by

Colonel Leith Hay: "I was much struck with the simplicity of Lord Wellington's attire. He wore a light grey pelisse-coat, single-breasted, without a sash, with his sword buckled round his waist underneath the coat, the hilt merely protruding, with a cocked hat under his arm. He wore a white neckerchief."

Wellington did not follow the retreating army further than Valladolid, where he captured seventeen pieces of cannon, and nearly 1000 sick and wounded men; but the recent operations had resulted in other misfortunes to the French. The guerillas, under Martinez, made 300 prisoners. Tordasillas surrendered to Santo Cildeo, while, alarmed by the movements of the Gallician army, which, in obedience to Lord Wellington's directions, had passed the Douro and reached the Zapardiel, Clausel gave up the line of the former river. Joseph Buonaparte, after dismantling the castle, forcing a contribution, and robbing the churches of their plate, abandoned Segovia, and retired through the passes of the Guadarama—thus separating his own army from that of Portugal, and leaving the approaches to the capital open to the advance of the Allies.

On the 12th of August, at noon, the advanced guard of the Allies reached Madrid amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of the populace. It was a triumphant entry. In hollow demonstrations of gratitude the Spaniards were liberal enough, and during Wel-

lington's brief stay in the Spanish capital he was always hailed with the wildest enthusiasm. The blessings of the people accompanied him wheresoever he went; the municipal authorities gave a bull-fight in his honour; and when he appeared in the royal box, the air rang with the acclamations of 12,000 spectators; he could not walk by daylight for the pressure of the multitudes who gathered round him; yet the moment the Spaniards were called upon for any substantial proof of their good feeling, they were found wanting. "They cry '*Viva!*'" wrote the great soldier himself, "and are very fond of us, and hate the French; but they are in general the most incapable of useful exertion of all the nations that I have known. The most vain, and at the same time the most ignorant, particularly of military affairs, and, above all, of military affairs in their own country."

"Meantime," says Miss Martineau, "Wellington's position was far less secure than brilliant; and he must lose no time, and spare no energy, in maintaining it. He had no means at Madrid which would justify his remaining there: no money came from home; and he knew he need not look for any just at the moment when England was going to war with America. The French were gathering up their forces in the north, and he went forth to find them."

CHAPTER VII

TO THE CLOSE OF THE SPANISH CAMPAIGNS

AT the end of August 1812 the following were the situations of the French armies in Spain. Marshal Soult was in Granada, on his way to Valencia, in which province a junction had taken place between Joseph Buonaparte and Suchet on the 29th. Upwards of 60,000 Frenchmen would therefore ere long be assembled in that quarter. The army of Portugal under General Clausel was on the Douro, about 23,000 strong, and expecting reinforcements; and Massena had recently been placed at the head of a French corps in the province of Alava. At this period Lord Wellington had 40,000 British and Portuguese at or near to Madrid; and Sir Roland Hill, with about half that number, was on his way from Estremadura to Toledo, by way of Almaraz. Of the three ill-disciplined Spanish armies in Gallicia, Granada, and Catalonia, the less said the better.

Aware that Joseph had effected a junction with Suchet, and that if Soult (moving, as we have said, towards Valencia), could unite his forces with those of the King, more than 60,000 men could be collected in that quarter, and be immediately disposable, Wellington determined to anticipate their operations by attacking Clausel upon the Douro. The well-fortified castle of Burgos, standing upon an oblong conical rocky hill, in the northern part of the province of Old Castile, was the chief depôt of his army; its capture, therefore, was of the utmost importance to the Allied troops. An attempt to carry the defences of the castle by an escalade having failed, breaching by guns was resorted to, but with no better success. Nothing remained but to resort to the more tedious but certain method by sap and mine. Twice over the mine was dug and fired, and on both occasions a tremendous breach was effected; but the resistance offered by the garrison to the storming party at each of the three sallies which were made was too much for our men; and by the 10th of October Burgos was still untaken.

From the enormous expenditure of musket cartridges, which his weakness in artillery had rendered unavoidable, Wellington felt it necessary to change his system of attack; and while a position known as the White Church was assailed with hot shot, a gallery was commenced against that of San Roman.

The former operation failed ; the latter, however, was continued with better success. An old breach in the second line[1] was cleared again by the fire from a large hornwork, at 300 yards' distance from the upper works of the castle. A new one, on the 18th, was declared practicable ; and Wellington determined to storm them both, while a strong detachment was to escalade the front of the works, and thus connect the attacks upon the breaches. At half-past four in the evening a flag was displayed on a hill west of the castle, as a signal that the mine was sprung. The troops instantly rushed to the breaches, and both were carried most gallantly. The Guards escaladed the second line, and some of the German Legion actually gained the third ; but the supports did not come up as promptly as they should have done, and the French governor, with a powerful reserve, rushed from the upper ground, drove the assailants beyond the outer line, and cleared the breaches. No troops could have fought more gallantly than the storming parties ; but numbers prevailed over valour, and the attack consequently failed. The Allied loss on this unfortunate occasion was severe. The explosion of the mines had destroyed the greater part of the church of San Roman, and the assailants effected a lodgment among the ruins ; but the following night the enemy sallied, drove out the picket, and for a

[1] The defences consisted of three lines.

short time obtained possession of the building. The ruins were once more cleared of the enemy, and a gallery commenced from the church against the second line—but the siege was virtually at an end. The troops had been gradually drawn to the front, in consequence of threatening movements of the French army, and on the 20th Lord Wellington gave the command of the investing force to Major-General Pack, and joined the divisions which hitherto had covered the operations against the castle. On the evening of the 21st an official order was given to raise the siege. And thus a general of consummate abilities, and a victorious army, were obliged to retire unsuccessfully from before a third-rate fortress "strong in nothing but the skill and bravery of the governor and his gallant soldiers," after (the casualties which occurred between the 18th and 21st being included) sustaining a total loss of 509 officers and men killed, and 1565 wounded or missing; a loss in numbers nearly equalling the garrison of the place.

Wellington's personal superintendence of all the operations of the siege was untiring. The arrangements for each assault were written by his own hand as he sat upon the ground, observing the point of attack; and he was so much and so often exposed to fire, that his escape seemed almost miraculous. The abandonment of the siege was rendered imperative

owing to a combined movement of the French armies of the south and centre, under Soult and Joseph Buonaparte. The step was taken just in time, for he was on the point of being crushed by a concentration of their forces, amounting to 114,000 men, while the army under his own personal command was hardly more than 33,000. By one of the most masterly retreats ever executed, he succeeded in extricating himself from this perilous situation, and in regaining the Portuguese frontier; though his soldiers suffered very severely during the retreat from fatigue, privation, and the inclemency of the weather.

Well might Lord Wellington describe that period of the campaign, from the night upon which he abandoned the height of St. Michael, until he halted before the Arapiles, as "the worst military situation" in which a British general had been placed. With a weak and dispirited army he commenced a retreat of 200 miles, followed by a force physically and numerically superior. The country he traversed afforded many fine positions for defence, but they were the most dangerous a general can occupy. The route was everywhere intersected by swollen rivers, whose safe passage depended on the accuracy with which the regressive movements were effected; while severe rains, deep roads, and the sudden rising of tributary streams, rendered it almost impossible to time the marching of a column with that precision

on which the nice combinations of an army are dependent. To fall back over a flat surface is much more hazardous than to retire by a hill-country. In the latter cavalry can seldom act, and artillery is useless. Every mountain-pass presents an obstacle to pursuit—they are positions the most embarrassing to a general—they cannot be forced in front; and the time they require in being turned allows a retreating army to move leisurely away, and consequently imposes forced marches on an advancing one to overtake it.

Other circumstances added seriously to Lord Wellington's embarrassments. The relaxed discipline of the soldiers had assumed alarming proportions; while the misconduct and insubordination of some of the regimental officers, and the indifference of others, aroused his grave displeasure, insomuch that he found it necessary to rate them severely in a letter which he addressed to the commanders of brigades and regiments. Effected in the midst of such obstacles and discouragements the retreat was, indeed, a masterpiece of generalship, and fully justified the language used of him by Wellington's noble, warm-hearted brother, the Marquis of Wellesley: "For my part, if I were called on to give my impartial testimony of the merits of your great general, I confess before Heaven, I would not select his victories, brilliant as they were—I would go to the

moments when difficulties pressed and crowded on him—when he had but the choice of extremities—when he was overhung by superior strength. It is to his retreats that I would go for the proudest and most undoubted evidence of his ability."

The remainder of the Peninsular War, though bristling with victories and great events, which were ever adding new laurels to Wellington's crown, must be passed over more rapidly. In 1813 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the armies of Spain and Portugal. His entire army now consisted of 200,000 men, of whom 40,000 were British. So confident was he now of success that, on re-passing the frontier, he rose in his stirrups, and waving his hat, exclaimed prophetically: "Farewell, Portugal!" The French, who were still numerically superior, expected that he would, as formerly, direct his movements by one of the two great roads of Salamanca or Talavera, and made vast preparations to defend the passage of the Douro: but Wellington had formed a very different plan of operations. By a totally unexpected and most daring and masterly movement, he turned one after another all the positions occupied by the French armies of the centre, of the south, and of the north; and crossed in succession the Tormes, the Douro, the Esla, the Carrion, and the Ebro. Burgos, which had so gallantly resisted and foiled his attacks the year before, was blown up at his approach.

Driving everything before him he overtook the retreating French army on the plain of Vittoria, and inflicted upon them the most decisive defeat ever sustained by the French army since the battle of Blenheim. They were beaten, as he said, "before the town, in the town, about the town, and out of the town." The slaughter was comparatively small, but the moral effect of the victory was overwhelming. "The troops," says General Gazan, chief of the staff of the French army, "lost all their baggage, all their cannon, all their military chest, all their ammunition, and all their papers." The rout not only freed the Peninsula from the invaders, but, as Wellington said, "it broke up the armistice at Dresden, and so led to Leipsic and the deliverance of Europe."

Pressing on his retreating foes, and giving them no time to rally, Wellington drove them in the utmost confusion to the recesses of the Pyrenees. Greatly alarmed at these disasters, Napoleon had meanwhile dispatched Marshal Soult to the Peninsula, with the rank of "Lieutenant of the Emperor," once more to try his strength against his invincible antagonist. Soult commenced operations with great vigour. Collecting all the troops within reach, he poured them with impetuous valour through the passes of the Pyrenees on the isolated posts of the British. On the 28th of July he fought the sanguinary and un-

profitable battle of Sorauren. Throughout the whole of this day Wellington moved about wherever the battle raged the hottest, and finally sat down upon the ground, "exposed within musket-range," to watch the progress of the battle. Several officers of his staff were wounded, and a ball striking the Marquis of Worcester's sword-belt, threw him from his horse, glanced off, and grazed Lord Wellington; but here, as at Vittoria, where he rode unscathed through the fire of eighty guns, he passed through the entire day without injury. A succession of combats followed, known to history as the "Battles of the Pyrenees;" but want of space forbids a detailed notice of them here. It is sufficient to say that in no previous engagement was the struggle more arduous than in these "Battles of the Pyrenees," and never was the military ability of the great Captain more severely put to the test than on this occasion. In a private letter written a few days after the last of these battles, Wellington remarked that he had never before seen such fighting. "It began," says he, "on the 25th of July, and excepting the 29th, when not a shot was fired, we had it every day till the 2nd of August. The battle of the 28th was fair *bludgeon* work." In a letter to Sir Thomas Graham he adds: "The French army must have suffered terribly. Between the 25th of last month [July] and the second of this [August] they were engaged seriously not less

than ten times. I understand that the officers say they have lost 15,000 men. . . It is strange enough that our diminution of strength up to the 31st does not exceed 1500 men, although I believe our casualties are 6000." The Commander-in-Chief's official account of these battles was brought to England by the Prince of Orange, one of his aides-de-camp, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The arrival of Wellington's baton of Field Marshal found the advanced guards of the British army planted on French territory.

The strongly fortified town of San Sebastian, with its sea-washed scarp, was carried by storm on the 31st of August, after a defence of great gallantry which cost many lives; and only a few hours later the victorious general defeated an attempt of the French again to penetrate into Spain at San Marcial. On the 8th of October he surprised the troops that were guarding the line of the Bidassoa, forced the passage, and began the invasion of the south of France. Crossing the Nivelle in despite of all the resistance which Soult could make, the British army, which five years before was compelled to take refuge in a corner of Portugal behind the lines of Torres Vedras, having now swept the invaders completely out of the Peninsula, bivouacked in uncontested triumph on the "sacred soil of France."

During the following month Wellington defeated

the French in a series of bloody actions, in their own territory, under the walls of Bayonne; of which actions—known as the "Battles of the Nive"—it is enough to say that they equalled those of the Pyrenees in obstinacy and duration. Nothing of importance occurred during the few remaining days of 1813. Both armies continued in quarters; in the camp of Wellington the fox-hounds were unkennelled, and he and his officers took the field twice a week, when he associated with them more as their equal than as their Commander-in-Chief.

Hostilities were resumed in January 1814, when Wellington drove the French across the Gava; and on the 29th of February he routed them again at Orthez, where he was wounded by a spent bullet, which struck the pommel of his sword, and caused a painful contusion. Finally, after a sanguinary battle, he carried Soult's entrenched camp at Toulouse, and compelled him to abandon the town, leaving behind him his wounded, his heavy artillery, and his stores. The battle of Toulouse has been the subject of much discussion, but, as a French writer[1] has said, "there was very little room for dispute. Soult, in his private correspondence with Suchet, does not consider himself the conqueror;" and Maxwell justly affirms that the claim of the French "is really too absurd for argument."

[1] M. Jules Maurel.

The tidings of Napoleon's abdication, which arrived at this juncture, terminated the great Peninsular War, in which Britain reaped a rich harvest of glory, and which, in spite of innumerable discouragements and apparently insurmountable obstacles, was carried to a triumphant conclusion by the extraordinary genius of a single man.[1]

"In his seven Peninsular campaigns," as M. Jules Maurel finely says, "Wellington had passed through all the trials that could be presented by fortune. He had carried on defensive war, and he had completely succeeded; he had carried on a war of ambuscades and surprisals, and he had also succeeded; he had assumed the offensive, and still he had been successful; he had marched boldly forward without incurring any disaster; and he had conducted long retreats without being broken." As regards his great battles, he had fought with superior numbers at Vimiero, at Oporto, at Vittoria, at Nivelle, and at Toulouse; and in all these cases he had gained the victory. He had engaged with equal numbers at Salamanca, at Pampeluna, at San Marcial, and at Orthez; and here again he had been victorious. He had fought with inferior numbers at Talavera, at Busaco, and at Almeida; and still victory had smiled upon his arms.

On the 14th of June Wellington took leave of

[1] Rev. James Taylor, D.D.

his army in a general order, in which he thanked them for their good conduct, discipline, and gallantry, in his own name and in that of the country at large. On the 23rd he reached Dover, in her Majesty's ship *Rosario*, where he was greeted with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of applause, and conveyed to his hotel upon the shoulders of the people. The Allied Sovereigns had preceded him to England, on their memorable visit to the Prince Regent; and the whole of them having assembled at Portsmouth to witness a naval review, Wellington set out the next morning to pay his respects to the Prince. Whatever may have been the failings of George IV., a want of appreciation of the character and services of the great commander was not among the number. On his return to town he received the thanks of the House of Lords in person, his wife and venerable mother being present during the ceremony; and having a few weeks before been created Marquis of Douro and Duke of Wellington, on the 28th he entered the House of Lords, and passed at one sitting through all the stages of the peerage, as baron, viscount, earl, and marquis, to the highest title of honour—an incident without a parallel in our national history.

Besides the thanks of the House of Commons, £10,000 per annum was unanimously voted to him out of the Consolidated Fund, along with £100,000,

in addition to a former grant of £200,000, making in all a sum equivalent to half a million sterling. His Grace attended in person to receive the thanks of the House of Commons, wearing his uniform of Field Marshal, the ribbon of the Garter, and various decorations. That dignity of simplicity which marked his conduct on all occasions, under the most diverse circumstances, was very noticeable in his reception of these honours; and nothing could have been in better taste than his replies to both Houses of Parliament.

Meanwhile Napoleon, the guilty author of the long war, the disturber of the peace of Europe, had had assigned to him, as his future kingdom and place of retreat, the small island of Elba, which was secured to him as an independent sovereignty; and on the 3rd of May he had landed on the island, in company with a few of his most intimate friends and admirers. For a time he appeared to be absorbed in the improvement of his little realm; but appearances are proverbially deceitful, and through the ensuing autumn and winter, while the nations were resting in a fancied security, his secret correspondence with his adherents in France was active.

On the 3rd of March, 1815, Wellington received tidings that the ex-Emperor had landed at Cannes, with his court, military officers, and 1200 troops, and was marching to Paris!

CHAPTER VIII

WATERLOO

AT the time of Napoleon's return to France the Congress of Vienna, which had been convened for the settlement of the affairs of Europe after the abdication of the Emperor, was still sitting. In the previous January (1815) the Duke of Wellington had been accredited to Vienna as the British representative at the Congress; and between January and March he united with Austria and France in resisting the rapacious and unprincipled demands of Russia and Prussia. But while "the vultures and foxes were quarrelling over their spoil," the news that the eagle had broken loose from Elba came like a thunderbolt, and put a sudden stop to the wrangling. United by a common danger, the Powers signed an important treaty of alliance on the 13th of March, pledging themselves not only to support Louis XVIII. on the French throne, but to adopt vigorous and instant measures to put down their terrible antagonist, whom

they now declared to be beyond the pale of the law of nations.

The progress of Napoleon's march as far as Grenoble was not marked by any great display of enthusiasm; but as he approached that city the unanimous defection of an entire regiment (Labedoyere's) from the royal cause completely changed the aspect of his affairs. Marshal Ney, too, who had volunteered to seize the usurper, and carry him in a cage to Paris, no sooner came within sight of his old master than he declared in his favour. Thenceforth the Imperial eagle was everywhere displayed on his approach; and on the 20th of March Napoleon entered Paris at the moment that Louis XVIII. was quitting the city on the other side for Lille. Undismayed by the knowledge of the determination of the Allies, the restless tyrant began to organize his army; and by dint of untiring diligence, aided by the services of most of his old generals, he succeeded in collecting a formidable force; greatly augmented by the vast numbers of prisoners of war who had returned to France from all parts of Europe. In the first instance he announced himself as the lieutenant of his son; but at Lyons he addressed the people in his own name, heading a manifesto "By the grace of God," in which he pronounced everything null and void which had been done since his abdication; abolishing all orders and appointments, and convoking

a general meeting of the authorities, to re-establish a constitution, giving to the assembly the title of Champ de Mai.

Once again France was at his feet, but not under quite the same conditions as of old. This man, with the blood of countless thousands at his door, had now no other guarantee to propose to outside nations than his word; and after the fatal experience of fifteen years, who would be rash enough to accept that guarantee? Peace, with a government placed in such hands, would prove only a perpetual state of uncertainty, anxiety, and danger. It was therefore abundantly clear to Napoleon that, having once more drawn the sword, the scabbard must be thrown away. In leaving his island kingdom he had staked everything, and well he knew that defeat meant utter and irreparable ruin. The army at his back was a large one, about 200,000 men, the re-established Imperial Guard alone amounting to 40,000. Unceasing efforts were made to provide a powerful artillery; and that they were successful was proved by the number of cannon abandoned at Waterloo. Napoleon wished also to fortify Paris, and asked Carnot how much time and money the operation would cost. "Two hundred millions and three years," replied the minister; "and I would ask only 60,000 men, and twenty-four hours, to demolish the whole."

On the 28th of March the Duke of Wellington

was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the Netherlands, the Prince of Orange having resigned the chief and accepted a subordinate command under the Duke. It was the post of honour and of peril, and Wellington had been called to it by the urgent and unanimous request of the Allied Sovereigns. Early on the morning of the 5th of April he reached Brussels; and startling events, each in itself a history, followed in quick succession.

As time was everything to Napoleon, he resolved to forego the manifold advantages of adopting a purely defensive system of warfare, and to strike an immediate blow at the Allied armies stationed in Belgium, in the hope that he might thus paralyze for awhile the energies of the whole body of his enemies. On the 12th of May he quitted the French capital before daylight, and on the 14th joined the army collected on the frontier. Ere sunrise the next morning he was dressed and on horseback. His *corps d'armée* was already on the march, the Prussian outposts driven in, and his last campaign opened.

Of the three armies, British, French, and Prussian, now collected on the French frontier, that commanded by the Duke of Wellington was the weakest and the worst. It was, with few exceptions, "a green army," formed of a mixed force, comprising British, Hanoverian, and Belgian troops, with the contingents of Nassau and Brunswick Oels; and its effective

strength on the 15th of June was 78,500 men, of whom 53,000 only were British, Germans, and Hanoverians. The Prussian army was considerably stronger; and on the 27th of May its total strength was returned at 115,000 men. The French force exceeded 154,000, of whom the greater number were veterans, hardened in war. Of these about 24,700 were cavalry, 7500 artillery, and 122,000 infantry, with 296 pieces of cannon.

The first news that reached Paris was of victory. The bulk of the Prussian army was at Ligny, nine miles north-east of Charleroi, under Blücher; and at four o'clock on the 16th of June Napoleon attacked it. For three hours a desperate fight waged, which appeared to give no advantage to either side; but some French reinforcements coming up, Napoleon was able to bring forward all his reserves, and the Prussians fell back in some disorder. The French captured twenty-one pieces of cannon, which had been left entangled in the narrow lanes behind the village; but there was no pursuit during the night. This was the victory.

Meanwhile Ney had encountered the Allied force, which held the position of Quatre Bras, on the main road between Brussels and Charleroi, and after a fearful and sanguinary battle, had been unable to dislodge them. Blücher's retreat, however, compelled Wellington to retire from Quatre Bras; and by the

afternoon of the 17th he and his army had fallen back to Waterloo, another village on the Brussels road, and only nine miles from that capital. Immediately to the south of the village the high-road is intersected in two places by the roads to Louvaine and Wavre, which themselves unite about a mile to the west of the points of intersection, and form a kind of fork. Between the prongs of this fork, as well as a little to the north and south of them, Wellington drew out his forces. At his right extremity was a ravine; at his left a height, whence he could communicate with Blücher, who had promised to come to his aid if he should be attacked. In front of the right-centre was a farm-house—the farm-house of Hougomont; in front of the left-centre was another—La Haye Sainte. All the night of the 17th the French were taking up their position on a range of heights in front. No part of the Allied position was remarkable for natural strength—on every point the British position was assailable; and the island soldier had no reliance but in "God and his Grace," for all else depended on his own stout heart and vigorous brain. On surveying the force that he was so soon to attack, Napoleon exclaimed to one of his staff: "Ah! je te les tiens donc, ces Anglais!"[1]

The morning of the 18th broke. The rain, which had fallen throughout the night, still fell pitilessly;

[1] "Ah! I have them now, these English!"

but the wind dropped, and the dawn of the memorable day was gloomy and foreboding. The British soldiers recovered from the chill cast over them by the inclemency of the weather; and from the ridge of their position calmly observed the enemy's masses coming up in long succession, and forming their numerous columns on the heights in front of the farm-house of La Belle Alliance. From a gently rising ground beside the farm-house Napoleon viewed the field; and there he is said to have remained for a considerable part of the day—dismounted, pacing to and fro with his hands behind him, receiving communications from his aide-de-camp, and issuing orders to his officers. Wellington, at the opening of the engagement, stood upon a ridge immediately behind La Haye, an exposed position about a mile to the left of La Haye Sainte; but as the conflict thickened, where difficulties arose and danger threatened, there the Duke was found.

A word as to the disposition of the Allied army. The British regiments were arranged, individually, in squares, with triple files, each placed sufficiently apart to allow it to deploy when requisite. The squares were mostly parallel, but a few were judiciously thrown back; and this disposition, when the French cavalry had passed the advanced regiments, exposed them to a flanking fire from the squares behind. The English cavalry were in the rear of the infantry, and

the artillery in battery over the line. The fight of Waterloo may be easily comprehended by noting that for ten hours it was a continued succession of attacks of the French columns on the squares; the British artillery playing upon them as they advanced, and the cavalry charging when they receded.

From daybreak occasional shots had been interchanged between the light troops; but not till a little before noon, when the second corps of the French army advanced against Hougomont, did the battle really commence. Hougomont was the key of the Duke's position, a post naturally of considerable strength, and care had been taken to increase it. It was garrisoned by the light companies of the Coldstream and 1st and 3rd Guards; while a detachment was formed on an eminence behind, to support the troops defending the house and the wood on its left. Three hundred Nassau riflemen were stationed in the wood and garden; but the first attack of the enemy dispersed them.

To carry Hougomont the efforts of the second corps were principally directed throughout the day. This fine corps, 30,000 strong, comprised three divisions; and each of these, in quick succession, attacked the well-defended farm-house. The advance of the assailants was covered by a tremendous cross-fire of nearly one hundred pieces, while the British guns in battery on the heights above returned the

cannonade, and made fearful havoc in the dense columns of the enemy as they advanced or retired from the attack. Despairing of success, the French artillery at last opened with shells upon the house; the old tower of Hougomont was quickly in a blaze; the fire reached the chapel, and many of the wounded, both assailants and defenders, perished miserably there. But still the place remained untaken. It was computed that Napoleon's repeated and desperate attacks upon this post cost him 8000 men. The British lost 1400.

The advance of the second corps was followed by a general onset upon the British line, three hundred pieces of artillery opening their cannonade, and the French columns in different points advancing to the attack. Charges of cavalry and infantry, sometimes separately and sometimes with united force, were made in vain. The British squares stood firm. Yet no situation could have called for more unyielding courage, as certainly none was more severely trying. There is an exciting feeling in an attacking body that stimulates the coldest and blunts the thought of danger. The tumultuous enthusiasm of the assault spreads from man to man, and duller spirits catch a gallant frenzy from the brave around them. But the enduring and devoted courage which pervaded the British squares when, hour after hour, mowed down by a murderous artillery, and wearied by furious and

frequent onsets of lancers and cuirassiers; when the constant order, "Close up! close up!" marked the quick succession of slaughter that thinned their diminished ranks; and when the day wore later, when the remnants of two, and even three regiments were necessary to complete the square which one of them had formed in the morning—to support this with firmness, and feed death, inactive and unmoved, was courage of the highest order, for which no praise could be deemed extravagant.

Next to Hougomont, perhaps the bloodiest corner of the field of Waterloo was La Haye Sainte, the post in front of the British left-centre. The rude farm-house and barn were defended by five hundred German riflemen; and here the attack was fierce and constant, and the defence gallant and protracted. While a number of guns played on it with shot and shell, it was assailed by a strong column of infantry. Thrice were they repulsed; but the barn caught fire, and the number of the garrison decreasing, it was found impossible, from its exposed situation, to supply the loss and throw in reinforcements. Still worse, the ammunition of the rifle corps failed; and, reduced to a few cartridges, their fire had almost ceased. Encouraged by this casualty, the French, at the fourth attempt, turned the position. Though the doors were burst in, still the gallant Germans held the house with their bayonets; but at length the

French scaled the walls and roof, and firing on the little handful of defenders from above, they carried the post. No quarter was given, and the remnant of the brave riflemen were bayoneted on the spot.

This was, however, the only point where, during the long and sanguinary conflict, Napoleon succeeded. He became master of a dilapidated dwelling, its roof destroyed by shells, and its walls perforated by a thousand shot-holes; and when obtained, an incessant torrent of grape and shrapnel from the British artillery on the heights above rendered its acquisition useless for future operations, and made his persistence in maintaining it a wanton and unnecessary sacrifice of human life.

Napoleon's great object throughout the day was to weary the British into defeat by fierce and incessant onsets with masses of cavalry and infantry, generally supported by a numerous and destructive artillery: Wellington's object was to hold the field till Blücher's promised help arrived. Hence there was a terrible sameness in the battle of the 18th of June. The British generals—Wellington, Lord Hill, etc., as well as the Prince of Orange and the Spanish volunteer general, Pozzo di Borgo and Alava—flew by turns from one regiment to another to animate the men; entered the squares, received the charges, and quitted them again after their fire had been delivered, to fly to another, thus setting an example and imparting

resolution to all. "Stand fast!. Stand to the last man, my lads!" repeated Wellington from square to square; "we must not be beaten; what would they say of us in England?"

Here were elements of the struggle which had never entered into Napoleon's calculations. When he saw his columns driven back in confusion—when his cavalry receded from the squares they could not penetrate—when battalions were reduced to companies by the fire of his cannon, and still that "feeble few" showed a perfect front, and held the ground they had originally taken—no wonder his admiration was expressed to Soult. "How beautifully these English fight!" he exclaimed; "but they must give way." As hour after hour wore by, the position of the Allied army became, indeed, very critical. Its own glorious efforts exhausted its strength, and every noble repulse rendered it less capable of continuing what seemed to prove an endless resistance. Though masses of the enemy had fallen, thousands came on anew. With desperate attachment the French army pressed forward at Napoleon's command; and while each advance terminated in defeat and slaughter, fresh battalions crossed the valley; and, mounting the ridge with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" exhibited a devotion which has never been surpassed.

Wellington's reserves had gradually been brought

into action; and the left, though but partially engaged, dared not, weakened as it was, send assistance to the right and centre. Many battalions were miserably reduced, and presented but skeletons of what these beautiful brigades had been when they left Brussels two days before. The loss of individual regiments was prodigious. One had 400 men mowed down in square without drawing a trigger: it lost almost all its officers, and a subaltern commanded it for half the day. Another, when not 200 men were left, rushed into a French column and routed it with the bayonet; a third, when nearly annihilated, sent to require support: none could be given, and the commanding officer was told that he must "stand or fall where he was!"

"No wonder that Wellington almost despaired. He calculated, and justly, that he had an army which would perish where it stood; but when he saw the devastation caused by the incessant attacks of an enemy who appeared determined to succeed, is it surprising that his watch was frequently consulted, and that he prayed for night or Blücher?"[1]

Evening came, and yet no relief. As he viewed the diminished numbers of his brave battalions, still presenting the same fearless attitude that they had done when the battle opened, Wellington felt that to human endurance there is a limit, and turned his

[1] *Stories of Waterloo.*

glass repeatedly to that direction from which his expected support must come. At times, also, the temper of the troops had nearly failed; and particularly among the Irish regiments, the reiterated question of "When shall we get at them?" showed how ardent was the wish to avoid inactive slaughter, and by plunging into the columns of the assailants, to avenge the death of their companions. But the "Be cool, my boys!" from their officers was sufficient to restrain this impatience, and, cumbering the ground with their dead, they waited with desperate intrepidity for the hour to arrive when victory and vengeance should be their own!

At last the welcome sound of distant artillery was heard in the direction of St. Lambert, and a staff officer reported that the head of the Prussian column was already in the Bois de Paris, a mile and a half from La Haye. It is said that Napoleon felt assured that the distant cannonade was only the fire of Grouchy's guns, who, in obedience to his repeated orders, had reached the battle-ground alone, or was advancing *pari passu*, and holding a Prussian force under Bülow in check. This intelligence was rapidly conveyed along the line; and, to a soldiery easily exhilarated, victory appeared certain, and preparations were made for what was believed to be a final and triumphant attack.

But the illusion was brief. The Prussians de-

bouched from a wood at Frischermont, less than 600 yards from La Haye; and half Napoleon's right wing was thrown back to check their attack, while his last grand movement should be executed against the British left-centre in front of him.

Wellington realized at a glance the object of these new tactics, and ordered every disposable man to the threatened spot. Presently, a continued roar of cannon and musketry—the most dinning that had yet been heard—announced that the final struggle had begun. Then there was a pause—sudden, brief, complete; and then again a tremendous outburst of mingled sounds. The Old Guard of France, led on by Ney himself, had been checked, cast in heaps of dead and wounded; the remainder wavered, turned, and fled. When Napoleon saw that the British had broken in upon his Old Guard, he became pale as death, and said in a tone of dismay, "They are all mixed!"[1]

The irremediable disorder consequent on this decisive repulse, as well as a confusion in the French rear, where the newly-arrived Prussians were fiercely attacking them, did not escape the eagle glance of Wellington. "The hour is come," he exclaimed, as, closing his telescope, he commanded the whole line to advance. The order was exultingly obeyed; and forming four deep, the British came on. Wounds

[1] Martineau's *History of England*, 1800—1815.

and fatigue and hunger were all forgotten, as with their customary steadiness they crossed the ridge; but when they saw the French, and began to move down the hill, a cheer that rent the heavens pealed from their proud array.

Panic-stricken and disorganized, the French resistance was short and feeble. The Prussian cannon thundered in their rear—the British bayonet was flashing in their front—and unable to stand the terror of the charge, they broke and fled. A dreadful and indiscriminate carnage ensued. The great road was choked with equipages, and cumbered with the dead and dying; while the fields, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with a host of helpless fugitives. Courage and discipline were forgotten; and Napoleon's army of yesterday was now a splendid wreck—a terror-stricken multitude! His own words best describe it—"It was a total rout!" Turning to an aide-de-camp, with a face livid with rage and despair, he muttered in a tremulous voice—"A présent c'est fini!—sauvons nous!" and rode off the field, attended by his guide and staff. The arrival of Blücher had changed the defeat of Waterloo into an unparalleled and irretrievable disaster, and Napoleon's sun had set for ever.

When night came it brought no respite to his shattered army; and the moon rose upon the broken host to light the victors to their prey. The British

pressed closely on the rear of the flying enemy; and the roads, strewn, as we have said, with the dead and wounded, and blocked by deserted guns and broken equipages, became almost impassable to the fugitives —hence the slaughter from Waterloo to Genappe was frightful. But, wearied with blood (for the French, throwing away their arms to expedite their flight, offered no resistance) and exhausted with hunger and fatigue, the British pursuit relaxed, and the work of death was abandoned to their fresher and more sanguinary Allies.

By moonlight Wellington recrossed the battle-ground, and arrived for supper at Brussels—an honour which Napoleon had promised to confer upon that ancient city. The excited feelings which such a victory must have produced are said to have suffered a reaction, and given place to deep despondency, as he rode past the dying and the dead. God knows, it was a sorry sight; for on a surface not exceeding two square miles, 50,000 dead or disabled men and horses were extended!

CHAPTER IX

FROM PEACE TO PEACE

THE abdication of Napoleon, the march of the Allied armies to Paris, and the occupation of the French capital, speedily followed "the crowning mercy" of Waterloo. The Prussians, exasperated by the miseries which their own country had suffered at the hands of the French, plundered and burnt the towns wherever they came; and Blücher avowed his determination to seize Napoleon, if possible, and hang him in front of his army. He also demanded a hundred million francs from the city of Paris, as a war contribution, and was bent on blowing up the bridge of Jena and demolishing the Austerlitz column. But Wellington, by his prudent and dexterous management, succeeded in pacifying the fierce "Marshal Forwards," and in preventing the execution of these furious acts of vengeance. It was owing to his remonstrances, too, that the Allied Sovereigns were prevented from carrying into effect their unwise and

selfish schemes for the dismemberment of France.[1] Indeed, on all occasions during his sojourn in Paris, the Duke acted as a mediator between the French and the more violent of the Allies. While the Prussians treated France as a bandit, deserving of capital punishment for its crimes, the Duke looked upon her rather as a prodigal, whom it was alike the policy and interest of her neighbours to conciliate and reclaim. In spite of these good offices, however, the Duke was continually held up to the execration of the people of Paris by the republican prints of the day.

A few days previous to his departure from the French metropolis, he gave a grand entertainment, to which were invited the notabilities, including the Bourbon princes. In the course of the evening smoke was observed to be rising from the lower part of the house, and on investigating the cause, it was found to proceed from an oiled rag, which was burning near a large quantity of gunpowder, and between two barrels of oil. It was extinguished and the train removed, when the Duke, having been informed of the occurrence, enjoined silence until the company had retired.

Hardly two years later, when the Duke was again in Paris, as the representative of Britain, another dastardly attempt was made upon his life. His assailant was a subaltern officer named André Cantillon, who discharged a pistol at the Duke as he was driving from

[1] Rev. James Taylor, D.D.

the Champs Elysées to his hotel, though with so bad an aim that the bullet did not even strike the carriage. When the would-be murderer was put upon his trial, the jury, in the teeth of the strongest possible evidence, thought proper to acquit him. Cantillon had been in the Imperial service, and when Napoleon died, some three years afterwards, it was found that he had left him 10,000 francs, in testimony of his approbation of the dastardly attempt. Always excepting the assassination of the Duke d'Enghien, this was the very foulest blot on the character of the ex-Emperor, and would lead to the inference that there had been some complicity on his part in that and the previous attack on the life of the man whom he had failed to conquer.

Meanwhile a grateful country had not forgotten to mark its sense of the priceless services of the Duke at Quatre Bras and Waterloo; and on the 9th of November, 1817, the Commissioners appointed by Parliament concluded an agreement with Lord Rivers for the purchase of the mansion and demesne of Strathfieldsaye, in Hampshire; and Strathfieldsaye became by gift the country estate of the conqueror of Napoleon. The price paid for the estate by the nation was £263,000. The only service-tenure attached to the gift was the annual presentation, on the 18th of June, of a small tri-coloured flag to the Sovereign.

On the division of the Waterloo prize-money, in June 1819, the share to which Wellington became entitled was £60,000. The general officers received £1250 each; field officers, £420; captains, £90; subalterns, £33; sergeants, £9; rank and file, £2 10*s*. The Crown had almost exhausted upon him the titles and places of honour at its command; but what it had further to bestow was conferred the instant the respective vacancies occurred. Some of his posts, that of Master-General of the Ordnance, for example, were attended both with labour and responsibility; but his methodical habits, early hours, and untiring application enabled him to get through more business with ease to himself in a day, than some of his brother officers could accomplish in a week.

On the death of the Duke of York, in January 1827, Wellington was appointed General-Commander-in-Chief of the British army; and about the same time received his first offer of the Premiership. When asked in the House of Lords whether the King had made him this offer, he replied "that the situation was one for which he was not qualified," and that "he should have been worse than mad if he had thought of such a thing." Great, therefore, was the surprise of most, and the amusement of not a few, when, hardly a twelvemonth later, he accepted the seals of office and became Prime Minister of England.

From the earliest moment of the Duke's accession

to his high office, he was repeatedly taunted with his former declaration of his unfitness for such a post; but he soon convinced his assailants, in and out of Parliament, that the estimate formed by men of genius of their own capacity ought not to be taken *au pied de la lettre*. If dissimilar in some of his predilections from most of his predecessors, it soon became evident that his habits of business were first-rate, and that he possessed many of the higher and more important qualifications for his office. One thing appeared to be certain, namely, that he was the least luxurious First Lord of the Treasury that had ever wielded the destinies of a nation; for we owe to his prying assailants an account of his daily life, which proves that his powers of endurance and application were of no ordinary kind. It was stated in most of the public journals of the time, on what was deemed competent authority, that his Grace slept upon a mattress spread upon an iron camp-bedstead; that he rose regularly at seven o'clock in the morning, breakfasted at eight, and immediately afterwards applied himself sedulously to his official duties; that on the arrival of the post, it was his undeviating practice to append at once to every application such instructions as would enable his secretary to reply to it with little chance of a misinterpretation of his meaning; and that soon afterwards he mounted his charger and proceeded to the Treasury, where he

remained engaged in business until five o'clock, unless summoned to attend a privy council or a meeting of the Cabinet. The worst part of the business, so far as laggards were concerned, was, that he was accustomed to exact from others some portion of the punctuality he was always prepared to observe himself; and many are the anecdotes that have been related, from time to time, of his attempts to reform the habits of the subordinate civil officers of the Crown.

One of his characteristics was, that he would not admit of the existence of a difficulty. With him nothing seemed impossible that fell within the scope of his duty. Wishing to get rid of some of the perplexity which encumbered a portion of the public accounts of the Treasury, and being assured that the thing was impracticable, he is said to have remarked —"Never mind; if *you* cannot accomplish it, I will send you in half-a-dozen pay-sergeants who will." The menaced incursion was of course averted by the achievement of this impossibility. It was, he was accustomed to assert, to his habits of discipline, applied to matters sometimes trivial in themselves, that he stood indebted for a large portion of his success in life. His mind was like the trunk of an elephant, which can tear up an oak, or can pick up a pin.

The constitution of the Wellington Cabinet, when the Duke had purged out its Liberal elements (namely,

the followers of the late Premier, Mr. Canning), gave unbounded satisfaction to the Tory party throughout the three kingdoms; but its policy soon came to be hated by the mass of the people. The great question of Roman Catholic emancipation had now for a quarter of a century occupied the attention of the legislature, and had become not so much a question of abstract principle and policy as of national peace and security. The continued anarchy of Ireland, the interminable divisions of cabinets, the destruction of imperial councils, and the utter impossibility of maintaining such a state of affairs, at length satisfied the Duke and Sir Robert Peel that the time had come when the clamorous demands of the Roman Catholics should be conceded. The Premier had a clear perception of the difficulties to be encountered, and of the sacrifices which must be made in thus surrendering the citádel of Protestant ascendency; but having made up his mind that this measure was necessary for the peace and welfare of the country, he disregarded all personal considerations, and carried it through resolutely and characteristically. Like a skilful tactician, in peace as in war, he kept his designs a secret till the time came for action; so that his adversaries had no opportunity of agitating beforehand against his plans.[1]

On the 5th of February, 1829, the policy of the

[1] Rev. James Taylor, D.D.

Government was announced in the speech from the Throne; and the Duke in the Upper and Sir Robert Peel in the Lower House, proposed the measure and boldly defended its expediency. One passage in the Duke's speech was long remembered by those who heard it. "My Lords," he said earnestly, "I am one of those who have passed more of my life in war than most men, and principally, I may say, in civil war too; and I must say this, that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice whatever, even one month of civil war in the country to which I am attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it." The tempest now burst forth in all its might upon the heads of the Duke and Sir Robert Peel, but they were inured to fire and had "filed their minds to the issue." In little more than a month the bill passed both Houses of Parliament by large majorities, received the royal assent, and became the law of the land.

The famous duel between the Duke and the young Earl of Winchelsea had its origin in one of the attacks which were made upon the Duke at this time in the public press. The offensive article was a letter from the Earl, printed in a leading newspaper, in which the Duke of Wellington was charged with an intention, "under the cloak of some outward show of zeal for the Protestant religion, to carry on his insidious designs for the infringement of our liberties, and the introduction of Papacy into every department

of the State." So deeply did the Duke allow this hasty and intemperate charge to provoke him that he sent a challenge to the Earl—a proceeding which met with almost universal condemnation. The Earl expressed his readiness to give the desired satisfaction, and a hostile meeting took place in Battersea Fields, Sir Henry Hardinge officiating as his Grace's second. The Duke fired first, but without effect, and Lord Winchelsea, after discharging his pistol in the air, tendered the apology which he had refused to give before the meeting. Thus the affair terminated.

Though the military career of Wellington may be said to have closed with Waterloo, he was not the man to rest upon his laurels. By nature, strengthened by habit, he was possessed of strong bodily and mental activity, and could endure a greater amount of nervous strain and physical fatigue than most young men of his time. The number of official duties he not only undertook, but really performed effectively, was very great; and even then he seemed to have leisure for exercise, for visits of courtesy to friends and acquaintances, and for attendance at political meetings and other public functions. At the beginning of spring, in the year 1829, he might be seen at seven o'clock in the morning, in either Hyde Park or the enclosure of St. James's Park, enjoying his accustomed walk: whence, after two hours' exercise, he returned to Apsley House, his

London residence in Piccadilly. In the afternoon he was frequently to be found at some public meeting, often of a charitable nature, or making what he was accustomed to consider his morning calls. No grand entertainment was considered to have gone off with *éclat* if the Duke had not looked in some time or other of the evening. Aware how anxiously his presence was expected, he usually endeavoured to gratify his friends by responding to their invitations, if only for half-an-hour, and in the exercise of such duties—for in that light he considered them—he has been known to make his appearance at four or five entertainments on the same evening. He rode a good deal on horseback, but does not appear to have been a very careful equestrian, for although never seriously hurt, he was more than once thrown. In the midst of his many avocations, his own private interests and those of his family were never neglected. Within twelve years of its purchase, he had added the Silchester to the Strathfieldsaye estate, thus increasing its extent many miles. So important were these additions to his territorial property, that the avenue which leads to the mansion is now upwards of eight miles in length.

The death of George IV., in June 1830, removed one of the props of the Tory party; and the new French revolution, which broke out in July, gave a shock to existing governments throughout Europe,

and was felt with peculiar force in Britain. Unrewarded by the cordial support and gratitude of the party for whom the Duke of Wellington had made such heavy sacrifices; pursued with the most unrelenting hostility by the powerful faction with which he had formerly acted; and unprepared to go to the extremes demanded of him by the new allies, the Duke's popularity was now rapidly declining; and it became obvious that he would not be able to carry on the government much longer. The new king, William IV., appears to have had a sincere regard for the Duke as a personal friend, but no great esteem for him as a politician. The public, always on the *qui vive* for new concessions, were now looking for one which the noble Premier had no mind to afford. The country—and particularly the agricultural part of the country—was in a state of ferment and unsettlement, bordering on revolution; and the Duke was assured, but assured in vain, that the great panacea for the state of things was parliamentary reform. He doubted the fact, and refused to pledge himself to any such remedy; and when the new parliament met in November 1830, he volunteered his memorable anti-reform declaration, "that the country already possessed a legislature which answered all the good purposes of legislation; that the system of legislation possessed the full and entire confidence of the country; and that he was not only

not prepared to bring forward any measure of reform, but would resist any such measure as long as he held any station in the government of the country."

This declaration gave the *coup de grâce* to his ministry, and of course only increased the public appetite for the prohibited food. What was formerly a wish had now assumed the character of a fierce demand, and revolution was threatened as the alternative of the refusal of reform. So fierce was the hostility with which the Duke was now regarded by the populace that they attacked his town house, demolishing many of the windows, and threatening such injury to the art treasures which the mansion contained, that the Duke was compelled to protect the windows by casements of iron. In this conjuncture of affairs, the Prime Minister accepted the only alternative which presented itself, and withdrew from the Government.

During the progress of the Reform Bill through the two Houses of Parliament, the mob everywhere exhibited a determined hostility to all who declined to take part in the popular movement; and the property of the Duke of Wellington became once more the object of its attacks. Among other attempts to annoy him, a gang of ruffians, pretending to be poachers, entered his preserves at Strathfieldsaye, and deliberately commenced the extermination of his game; and one of his Grace's gamekeepers was

killed in his endeavours to protect his master's property. In London the riotous crowd which formed the tail of the Corporation, when the latter repaired in procession to present a petition to the Houses of Parliament, resumed their attack upon Apsley House; and had it not been for its iron defences, would in all probability have done irreparable mischief. Having been driven away by the police, aided by the servants of the establishment, they proceeded to the statue of Achilles in Hyde Park, which they attempted unsuccessfully to injure.

The rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords was the signal for fresh outrages. Night after night, in their passage to and from the House, the lords who were among the opponents of the bill were mobbed and jeered—the Duke among the rest. Undismayed by the popular indignation, however, he persevered in his opposition to the last, and but for the protection occasionally afforded him by the better classes, might have been seriously injured by the violence of which he was the object. On the reintroduction of the Reform Bill in 1832, it obtained increased support, and, with the aid of a large number of newly-created peers was carried by a majority of nine.

Meanwhile, in the early part of 1831, the Duke had been visited by a severe domestic calamity, in the loss by death of his amiable duchess. A regard to

truth requires us to add that he had not been very happy in his domestic relations, and that some portion at least of the blame must undoubtedly be attributed to himself. His two sons (he never had a daughter) were sternly brought up; and his best friends have never sought to cloak the fact that his temper was extremely irritable. Yet the Duke was very fond of young children, and they, too, were remarkably fond of him. "I'm considered a great favourite with children," he told Mr. Weigall, the artist. "I was at the house of Lord S—— the other day, and there was a fine little fellow there, who had evidently been told that I was coming, and was on the look-out for me. He called soldiers 'Rub-a-dubs.' As soon as I went in he came up to me and said, 'You are not a Rub-a-dub at all, for you don't wear a red coat!'"

The Duke's fondness for children is shown in the fact that he kept in a cabinet several half-sovereigns, having a hole pierced in each, through which was passed a blue ribbon; and whenever any of the young nobility visited him, they frequently went away in raptures, having had one of these now precious mementoes placed over their shoulders by the kind old man. Among the last thus honoured were the Ladies Scott, the youthful daughters of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch. It is also a well-known fact that his Grace frequently carried about

his person a number of new shillings, for the purpose of distributing among the juveniles of the more humble classes of society.

In 1834 his Grace was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, an appointment which Archbishop Whately is said to have ridiculed by applying to be made a captain of dragoons. Wellington lost no time, however, in making himself acquainted with the laws and statutes which it had become his duty to administer; nay, it is said that, but a short time before his death, upon the occasion of the Parliamentary inquiry into the laws, character, and conduct of the University, he made it his business to master the whole of the voluminous evidence given during the investigation.

On the sudden dissolution of Lord Melbourne's Cabinet in November 1834, the King, to the no small astonishment of the ministry and their supporters, announced his intention to recall the Duke of Wellington to his councils. His Grace, however, was strongly of opinion that the office of Prime Minister should be conferred upon Sir Robert Peel; which was accordingly done, and the Duke himself accepted the office of Foreign Secretary. But the administration was overturned in the course of a few months. Having been outvoted on the famous Irish Church Bill, Peel and his colleagues resigned their offices on the 8th of April, 1835; and the Duke never again

took charge of any of the great civil departments of State. Nevertheless, during the years that intervened between 1835 and his death, the Duke continued to take an active part in nearly all the great questions which came before Parliament. He also devoted much time and attention to the consideration of the best mode of strengthening our coast defences, and seems to have experienced great uneasiness at the supineness which had been exhibited by successive governments in regard to them. To this subject he had frequently directed the attention of the public; and when the Prince de Joinville published a *vade mecum* for the invasion of England, he addressed an elaborate exposition of his views to Sir John Burgoyne on the state of our national defences. The belief was among his latest impressions that much remained to be done in the way of strengthening our coasts ere we should be in a condition to resist a well-devised and vigorously executed attempt to invade our shores.

In the January of 1845 the Queen and Prince Consort paid a visit to the Duke at Strathfieldsaye. "The curiosity manifested by the public on this occasion was only equalled by the zeal of the newspapers to satisfy it. The place was beset with tourists, who hung about the gates, and in some cases some wandered into the private grounds, and stared in at the windows. Reporters and country editors

flocked into the neighbourhood, and, in their eagerness for 'copy,' waylaid the Duke's servants and besought them, if not with tears in their eyes, at least with bribes in their hands, to be communicative. One daring young journalist on the staff of a popular paper actually sent a message to the Duke, requesting the honour of an interview, the public being so interested in all that was going on under his Grace's roof. The answer he received was short and unfavourable. 'Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mr. ——, and begs to say he does not see what his house at Strathfieldsaye has to do with the public press.' A satirical notice was also stuck up in the grounds, desiring that people who wished to see the house would drive up to the hall-door and ring the bell, but that they were to abstain from walking on the flag-stones and looking in at the windows. The visit was of a more private and informal character than is usual on such occasions, her Majesty desiring to mark in a special manner her sense of the great services which the Duke had rendered to his country and the Crown.

"The soldier-like regularity—we might almost say the clock-work monotony—which were characteristic of the Duke, were very marked during the Queen's stay at Strathfieldsaye. The Prince Consort's secretary, Mr. Anson, wrote: 'The Duke takes the Queen in to dinner, and sits by her Majesty, and after dinner

gets up and says, "With your Majesty's permission, I give the health of her Majesty," and then the same for the Prince. They then adjourn to the library, and the Duke sits on the sofa by the Queen for the rest of the evening, until eleven o'clock, the Prince and the gentlemen being scattered about the library or the billiard-room, which opens into it. In a large conservatory beyond, the band of the Duke's Grenadier regiment plays through the evening.'"[1]

At the time of the Chartist agitation (1848), when risings on a large scale were anticipated in various places, the Duke, acting on the wise maxim that "prevention is better than cure," took the precaution of putting London in a state of defence. Stealthily and unobserved, troops and cannon were stationed at all points of the city and suburbs where danger seemed likely to arise; and such were the preparations that had the Chartists persisted in their menaced attempt at insurrection, hardly a man would have escaped. Although the troops under arms were nowhere to be seen, they were known to be at hand in great strength; and so dismayed were the agitators, that it required only the police and the special constables to deal with them, and instead of bringing 300,000 to the field, as Fergus O'Connor had announced they would do, they could hardly muster ten. Nothing,

[1] *Victoria: Her Life and Reign*, pp. 140–141.

however, could have been more complete than the military arrangements of the Duke.

On the 1st of May, 1850, Prince Arthur (the present Duke of Connaught) was born, and the Duke, at the request of her Majesty, stood sponsor to him. Exactly a twelvemonth later, the Duke assisted at the inauguration of the National Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, in Hyde Park, and on his return from the Exhibition he repaired to the palace with an appropriate present for his royal godson. The infant was asleep, but when the Queen got back from the Crystal Palace, she was no sooner informed of the visit than, without waiting to unrobe, she placed the young prince in the Duke's arms.

Though no longer one of her Majesty's advisers by virtue of office, the aged Duke was still incontestably so in fact; and history tells us of no man who was summoned more frequently to give counsel to royalty in straits. He had, in fact, become a distinct power in the State, and always exercised his vast influence solely for what he deemed the public good. His popularity amongst all classes (the agitation over the Catholic question and the Reform Bill having long since passed away) was something wonderful and quite unique. Wherever he appeared, the great Duke was received with enthusiastic and affectionate greetings, and his sayings and doings, and quaint and

amusing letters, were regularly recorded by every newspaper in the kingdom.[1]

At length the end came, and suddenly. On the day of his death his valet went to the Duke's room (he was in residence at Walmer Castle) to awaken him at the accustomed hour; and finding him breathing rather heavily, retired. On returning in about an hour the Duke desired him, without mentioning his wish to the family, to send to Deal for his apothecary. The apothecary was soon upon the spot, and after examining his illustrious patient, who was at that time perfectly conscious, prescribed some medicine and went away. In a little while he was sent for again. The Duke had had a fit, and when the apothecary next saw him, his breathing was very laboured, and he was in a state of insensibility. At about seven o'clock in the evening—a calm, bright evening in mid September (1852)—he breathed his last. So gentle was the transition that it was not until a mirror had been placed before his lips that life was found to be extinct.

"Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
No drum beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,
Awaken with its call!

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[1] Rev. James Taylor, D.D.

No more, surveying with an eye impartial,
The long line of the coast,
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field-Marshal
Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
The rampart wall had scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
The dark and silent room,
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,
But smote the Warden hoar;
Ah! what a blow! that made all England tremble
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
The sun rose bright o'erhead.
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
That a great man was dead."

A public funeral was of course decreed to the departed Warrior—the man who, of all men, the nation delighted to honour; and after lying in state in Chelsea Hospital from the 12th to the 17th of November, the remains were removed to the Horse Guards, preparatory to their final deposit in St. Paul's Cathedral. Meanwhile the stately edifice had been fitted up with a splendour of solemnity of which there had been no previous example; and on the 18th of November, 1852, all that was mortal of the great

Duke was conveyed to its last resting-place amid the tears of the whole nation. Thither had Nelson preceded him nearly half a century before; and very finely has Tennyson put into the great Seaman's lips the question supposed to be uttered on the day when the great Soldier was laid beside him:

"Who is he that cometh, like an honoured guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?"

Very finely, too, does the poet answer:

"Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gained a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun."

A *Times* writer, nearly fifty years ago, thus summed up his panegyric on the great Duke, and doubtless his words would find an echo in the heart of every Englishman to-day: "When men in after times shall look back to the annals of England for examples of energy and public virtue among those who have

raised this country to her station on the earth, no name will remain more conspicuous or more unsullied than that of Arthur Wellesley, the great Duke of Wellington. The actions of his life were extraordinary; but his character was equal to his actions. He was the very type and model of an Englishman; and, though men are prone to invest the worthies of former ages with a dignity and merit they commonly withhold from their contemporaries, we can select none from the long array of our captains and our nobles who, taken for all in all, can claim a rivalry with him who is gone from amongst us, an inheritor of imperishable fame."

THE END

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