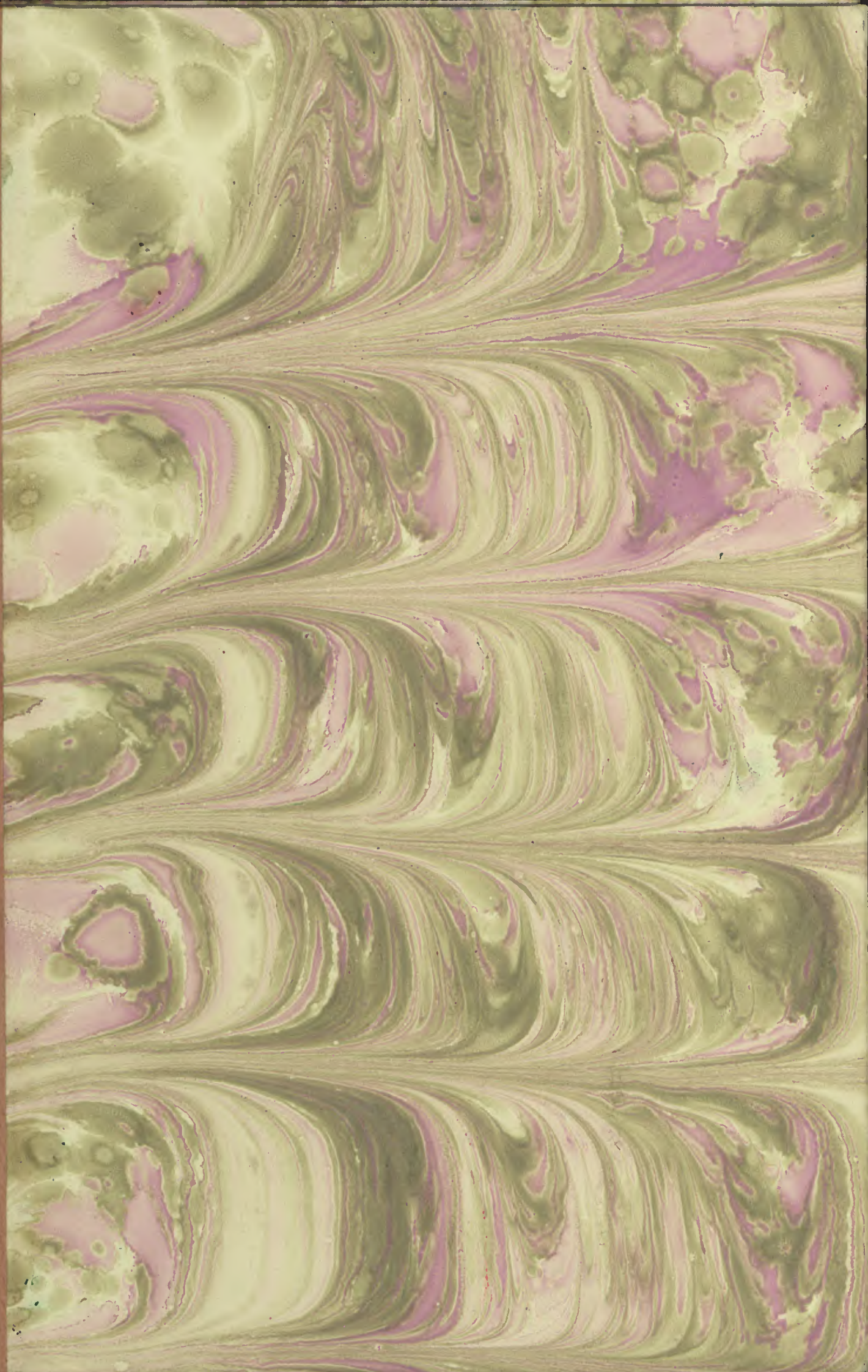


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FIRST CAMPAIGN

IN

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**THE PENINSULA,**

FROM THE LANDING OF

THE BRITISH ARMY IN PORTUGAL.

TO THE

CONVENTION OF CINTRA.

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1808.

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THE CHINESE

THE PENINSULA

THE BRITISH ARMY IN PORTUGAL

DEPARTMENT OF CHINA

1861



# CAMPAIGN

OF THE

## BRITISH ARMY IN PORTUGAL IN 1808.

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ON the 12th of July, 1808, an armament, consisting of 9,394 men, under July, 1808. the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley, K. B., sailed from the Cove of Cork, destined to co-operate with the Spanish and Portuguese nations, in resisting the aggressions of France, and expelling her armies from the Peninsula.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, having seen the fleet clear of the coast, repaired in a frigate to Coruña, and thence to Oporto; and, after holding conferences with the principal authorities of these places, and obtaining every possible information, he resolved to disembark his army at Mondego Bay. The fleet was therefore directed to rendezvous at this point, and was joined on the 30th by Sir Arthur. Here he received despatches from England, announcing, amongst other important matters, the intelligence that he was to be immediately reinforced with 4,700 men, who had embarked under the command of Generals Ackland and Anstruther, at Harwich and Ramsgate.

The disembarkation of the troops commenced on the 1st of August. The weather was calm; but in consequence of the heavy surf, which breaks along the whole line of this rocky and dangerous coast when the south wind prevails, which is commonly from August to the winter months, the operation was rendered so difficult that it was not completed until the 5th; and on that day Major-General Spencer, with his corps, arrived from the Tagus. The landing of these troops was effected upon the 7th and 8th,

August, 1808. and the force thus united, amounted to about 12,300 men, of which about 250 were cavalry, with eighteen guns, or three brigades of artillery. The 4th Veteran Battalion, being destined for Gibraltar, was not disembarked, and is therefore not included in the number here stated.

The landing being effected, the British general repaired to Montemor Velho, to concert with the Portuguese Commander, Don Bernardim Freire de Andrada, the subsequent operations; and the necessary preparations being completed, the British advanced guard, consisting of some companies of riflemen of the 60th and 95th regiments, and supported by the brigades under Major-Generals Hill and Ferguson, commenced its march southward from the banks of the Mondego, by the road to Leiria, on the 9th, and was followed on the 10th by the main body of the army, and on that night Sir Arthur Wellesley established his head-quarters at Lugar.

See Plan of operations, I.

Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns.

Sir Arthur chose the road nearest the coast, for the purpose of receiving his supplies from the fleet of store-ships, thus avoiding the drain upon his army, which the protection of magazines on shore would necessarily create, and also that he might be at hand to cover the disembarkation of the expected reinforcements from England. As the communication with the fleet, however, was liable to interruption from the state of the weather, the dangers of the coast, and the operations of the enemy, it was judged proper that the army should be accompanied by such supplies, as might render it independent of the contingencies of war, or weather, upon any such emergency.

Foy, Histoire de la Guerre de la Péninsule.

The British advanced guard reached Leiria on the 10th, and the army was concentrated there on the 11th. The Portuguese army also, under Don Bernardim Freire, joined the British at that place on the 12th, having marched from Coimbra by the road through Pombal.

The situation and numbers of the French army in Portugal, under the orders of Marshal Junot, Duke of Abrantes, at the period of the arrival of the British, were as follows:—

The whole force mustered from 25,000 to 26,000 men, including about 2,200 cavalry, and was thus disposed: General Loison, with from 7,000 to 8,000 men, was in the neighbourhood of Estremoz; 2,500 men were in the fortresses of Elvas and Almeida; a few hundreds were at Abrantes; a thousand at Santarem, and the same number at Pepiché; General Tho-



nières, with a brigade, was in the vicinity of Alcobaça ; and the remainder were quartered in Lisbon and on a circuit round, including both banks of the Tagus. August, 1808.

Marshal Junot, upon receiving intelligence that the British had landed at Mondego Bay, detached the Senior General of Division, De Laborde, with about 2,350 infantry, a small body of cavalry, and five guns, with directions to observe the movements of the British army, and retard its advance as much as possible, in order to afford time for the concentration of the French, and to cover the march of Loison, who was ordered to effect a junction without delay with De Laborde's force. Batalha was pointed out by Junot as the position most likely to effect these objects, the two principal routes from Lisbon to Leiria uniting at this place, namely, the Royal Road through Alcoentre, Rio Maior, and Candeiros, and the great road nearest the sea, by Torres Vedras, Obidos, and Alcobaça. Colonel Napier's History.  
Thiébault, Relation de l'Expédition du Portugal.  
Foy, Hist. de la Guerre de la Péninsule.

Thomières being upon the latter road, in the vicinity of Alcobaça, General De Laborde marched from Lisbon by the former on the morning of the 6th, and that evening reached Villa Franca. On the 8th he was at Rio Maior, and halted on the 9th at Candeiros ; but having received information that the British had taken the road by the coast, he marched, on the 10th, to Alcobaça, and was there joined by Thomières with his brigade. Thiébault.

The neighbourhood of Batalha affords no favourable position upon which a feeble body of troops might sustain the attack of a superior number. The country is woody, which renders it difficult to observe any movements made in front, and it is easy of access upon all points. De Laborde, however, remained at Alcobaça during the 11th and 12th ; but finding the ground too extensive for his division, and having ascertained that the British were at Leiria, only one march distant, he fell back, on the night of the 12th, to Obidos, and, having detached the battalion companies of the 4th Swiss to occupy Peniché, on the 14th he took up a position near the village of Roliça, one league in the rear, leaving one battalion near a mill in his front, upon the left of the little river Arnoya, and detaching three companies of the 70th French regiment to Bombarral, Cadaval, and Segura, to keep open the line of communication with Loison. Thus posted, he determined to await the arrival of the British, hoping that he would be joined by Loison. Foy, Hist.  
Col. Napier's History.  
Foy, Hist.

August, 1808. On the 13th, the British army resumed its advance; but the Portuguese General refused to co-operate, and in order to afford a plausible pretext for such pusillanimous conduct, required the British commander to supply his army with provisions, choosing to forget that he had appropriated to himself the magazine at Leiria. This extraordinary demand, that an auxiliary army, just disembarked, should nourish the native soldiers instead of being itself fed by the people, was of course strongly objected to by Sir Arthur Wellesley. He first appealed to the honour and patriotism of Freire, warmly admonishing him that he was about to forfeit all pretension to either by permitting the British to fight without his assistance; but finding him insensible to such appeals, he changed his tone of rebuke to one of conciliation, and recommended him to keep his troops in the rear of the British, and await in safety the result of the first battle. This advice, so agreeable to Freire, he determined to adopt; but at the solicitation of Colonel Trant, a military agent, he was induced to leave 1,400 infantry and 250 cavalry under the orders of the English general.

Sir A. Wellesley's Despatch, dated 16th August, 1808.

The British bivouacked at Calvaria on the evening of the 13th, and on the 14th reached Alcobaça. The following day the march was resumed, and the army arrived at Caldas da Rainha early in the afternoon. Four companies of riflemen of the 60th and 95th regiments, under Major Travers, were ordered to take possession of Obidos, which was occupied by an advanced post of the enemy, consisting of a picquet of infantry and a few cavalry. After a trifling resistance, they retired, and the advanced post at Brilos was also carried without loss; but the troops pursued the retiring enemy with such eagerness, that at the distance of three miles from their supports, they were out-flanked by two superior bodies of French, and were only saved by the opportune advance of General Spencer, which enabled them to effect their retreat to Obidos, with the loss, however, of two officers and twenty-seven men killed and wounded.

On the 16th, De Laborde's position was examined, with a view to its attack on the following morning.

Historical, Military, and Picturesque Observations upon Portugal, by Col. Landmann.

The village of Roliça, or Roriça, is about three leagues from Caldas, at the opposite extremity of the great valley which takes its name from the town of Obidos, situated about midway between, upon the summit of a small abrupt hill, and inclosed by an ancient moorish wall of considerable



height, forming an irregular triangle, and presenting an acute point towards the south, where stands an elevated tower. The soil is sandy, and, towards Roliça, studded with low firs and other shrubs. The valley is terminated on the south by the high table-land, upon the eastern side of which Roliça is situated, and which commands a view of the country as far as Obidos, and opens to the westward into a level plain, partially covered with pine-woods and olive-plantations, and very much inclosed as far as the heights of Amoreira.

August, 1808.

Col. Napier's History.

Foy.

Marq. of Londonderry's Narrative.

See Plan II. *Combat of Roliça.*

The high road from Caldas to Lisbon traverses this valley, by Obidos, whence towards Roliça it is commanded at unequal distances; but almost every where within the range of field artillery, by a succession of ridges, forming the eastern boundary of the valley, and rising like steps, until they are lost in the great mass of the Sierra de Barreguda, itself a shoot from the Monte Junto. From the latter village the road leads over a sandy uncultivated tract, and, after passing a small rivulet by a stone bridge, winds through a deep and narrow defile, up a steep range of heights, named after the village of Zambugeiro, which is situated about a mile beyond, upon the ridge.

These heights, which extend about three-quarters of a mile from east to west, crossing the great road in a direction nearly at right angles, are somewhat less than a mile from Roliça, and composed of a chain of high, rugged, and almost inaccessible hills, divided by five very stony, steep, and narrow ravines, the beds of winter torrents, and covered with pine-trees, cistuses, myrtles, and other shrubs of very high growth; altogether offering a most formidable front towards the north.

De Laborde's division was posted upon the high table-land near Roliça, whence, as before remarked, he was enabled to observe all which took place in the valley as far as Obidos; his right rested upon the hills, and his left upon an eminence on which was a windmill; and all the favourable points of defence, in the valley, and on the nearest hills on each side, were occupied by small detachments and picquets.

#### COMBAT OF ROLIÇA.

Early on the morning of the 17th, the British army, which, with Trant's Portuguese, altogether formed a body of 13,480 infantry, 490 cavalry, and



August, 1808. eighteen guns, marched from Caldas, and, after issuing from Obidos, formed three columns of battle.

Sir A. Wellesley's Despatch, dated Villa Verde, 17th August, 1808.

The right, under Colonel Trant, consisted of 1000 Portuguese infantry, and 50 cavalry of the same nation, and moved by the village of St. Amias, to turn the left flank of the French, and penetrate into the mountains in his rear.

Col. Napier's History.

The left column, commanded by Major-General Ferguson, was composed of his own and Brigadier-General Bowes' brigades of infantry, the former, consisting of the 36th, 40th, and 71st regiments; and the latter, of the 6th and 32d regiments, with 250 riflemen, 40 cavalry, and six guns; forming a total of 4,900 combatants. They marched by the crests of the hills to the left of the road, being destined to turn the right flank of De Laborde's position, and to oppose the efforts of Loison, if that General, who was supposed to be at Rio Maior, should appear during the action.

The centre, 9,000 in number, with twelve guns, composed of Major-General Hill's brigade (the 5th, 9th, and 38th regiments); Major-General Nightingale's (the 29th and 82d regiments); Brigadier-General Catlin Craufurd's (the 45th, 50th, and 91st regiments); and Brigadier-General Fane's Riflemen (the 5th battalion of the 60th, and the 2d battalion of the 95th regiments); 400 cavalry, of which about 200 were Portuguese; and 400 light infantry of the same nation; led by Sir Arthur Wellesley in person, marched straight against the front of the enemy's position.

Col. Napier's History.

Sir A. Wellesley's Despatch.

As this column advanced, Brigadier-General Fane's brigade, extending to its left, drove back the French skirmishers, and connected the march of General Ferguson's division with the centre. When the latter approached the elevated plain upon which De Laborde was posted, Major-General Hill, who moved with his brigade, formed in three columns of battalions upon the right of the valley, being supported by the cavalry, and covered by the fire of his light troops, pushed forward rapidly to attack the enemy's left; while Generals Nightingale and Craufurd marched by the main road, with the artillery, for some distance. The former now advanced with his brigade in line, supported by the 45th, and the light companies of the 50th and 91st, and preceded by the fire of nine guns, directly towards the enemy; while General Craufurd with the 50th, 91st, and three guns, remained as a reserve.

Col. Napier's History.

At this moment, Fane's Riflemen appeared upon the nearest hills on the

right flank of the French, the Portuguese troops showed the head of a column beyond St. Amias, upon the enemy's left, and Ferguson was seen descending from the higher grounds in the rear of General Fane. De Laborde's position seemed desperate; but with the coolness and dexterity of a practised warrior, he evaded the danger, and, covered by his excellent cavalry, fell back rapidly, but with the utmost regularity, to the heights of Zambugeiro. A fresh disposition now become indispensable to dislodge him from that formidable post. Colonel Trant, therefore, continued his march to turn the left of the new field of battle; Ferguson and Fane united, were directed through the mountains, to out-flank the French right; while the 5th, 9th, 29th, 45th, and 82d regiments were ordered against the front of the position. To the 5th, supported by the light companies of the 9th and 38th regiments, and the 29th, supported by the 9th, was assigned the difficult but honourable task of carrying the left of the heights, while the 45th and 82d were directed to perform the like duty on the right; the only approaches being by narrow paths, winding through deep ravines.

August, 1808.  
Sir A. Wellesley's Despatch.

A swarm of skirmishers starting forward, soon plunged into the passes, and spreading to the right and left, won their way with extreme difficulty among the rocks and tangled evergreens that overspread the steep ascent; with still greater difficulty the supporting columns followed, their formation being disordered in the confined and rugged passes; the hollows echoed with a continued roll of musketry; the shouts of the advancing troops were loudly answered by the enemy; and the curling smoke that broke from the sides of the mountains, marked the progress of the assailants, and showed how stoutly the defence was maintained: a heavy fire was opened upon them from the brushwood on either flank, and at every point at which they became exposed to the action of artillery, a shower of cannon-shot came sweeping down the ravines with terrible effect. De Laborde, watching anxiously for the arrival of Loison, gradually slackened his hold on the left, but clung tenaciously to the right, in the hope of yet effecting a junction with that General, and the ardour of the 29th and 9th regiments, who led the attack, favoured this skilful arrangement. It was intended that these battalions should take the right-hand path, of two leading up the same hollow, and thus have come upon De Laborde's flank in conjunction with Trant's column; but as the left path led more directly to the enemy, the

Col. Napier's History.

Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns.

Col. Napier's History.



August, 1808. 29th followed it, the 9th being close behind, and both regiments pressed forward so vigorously, as to reach the plain above, long before the flank movements of Trant and Ferguson could shake the credit of the position. The right of the 29th arrived first upon the summit, under a heavy and destructive fire, and, ere it could form, the Hon. Colonel Lake, by whom it was led, was killed, and General Brenier, at the head of some companies of the first battalion of the 70th French, charged so vigorously upon the right flank, that it was forced back upon the left wing, which had not yet reached the brow of the hill, leaving a Major and fifty or sixty others prisoners in the hands of the enemy. This success however was temporary. The 29th having rallied, and being now joined by the 9th, whose Colonel (Stewart) also fell, the whole pushed forward, and regained the dangerous footing above. De Laborde endeavoured to destroy these regiments before they could be succoured, and, failing in that, he yet gained time to rally his left wing upon the centre and right. Fane's Riflemen now began to appear on the left, and the 5th regiment, with the light companies of the 9th and 38th, following the right-hand path, arrived upon the heights. Ferguson, who had at first taken an erroneous direction towards the centre, recovered the true line, and was rapidly passing the right flank of the position. The French General then commenced a retreat by alternate masses, which he succeeded in effecting in good order, protecting his movements by vigorous charges of cavalry. At the village of Zambugeiro he made a fresh demonstration of resistance, but was forced back by a most gallant charge led by General Spencer; and thus valiantly disputing every favourable point upon which he could rally, he fell back to the Quinta de Bugagliera, where he halted until his detachments on the side of Segura had rejoined him; and, then taking to the narrow pass of Runa, marched all night to gain the position of Montachique, leaving three guns on the field of battle, and the road to Torres Vedras open to the victors.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, in his Despatch, thus speaks of the conduct of the troops employed on this occasion: "I cannot sufficiently applaud the conduct of the troops throughout this action. The enemy's positions were formidable, and he took them up with his usual ability and celerity, and defended them most gallantly. But I must observe, that although we had such a superiority of numbers employed in the operations of this day, the troops actually engaged



in the heat of the action, were, from unavoidable circumstances, only the 5th, 9th, and 29th, the Riflemen of the 60th and 95th, and the flank companies of Major-general Hill's brigade, being a number by no means equal to the enemy. Their conduct, therefore, deserves the highest commendations." August, 1808.

Colonel Napier observes, "It is an agreeable task to render a just tribute of applause to the conduct of a gallant, although unsuccessful enemy; and there is no danger of incurring the imputation of ostentatious liberality, in asserting, that Laborde's operations were exquisite specimens of the art of war. The free and confident manner in which he felt for his enemy; the occupation of Brilos, Obidos, and Roriça, in succession, by which he delayed the final moment of battle, and gained time for Loison; the judgment and nice calculation with which he maintained the position of Roriça; the obstinacy with which he defended the heights of Zambugeiro; were all proofs of a consummate knowledge of war, and a facility of command rarely attained." Col. Napier's History.

The introduction of these remarks has been ventured upon, because, in what necessarily follows, the unqualified and generous tribute of applause bestowed by the British commander, and the very distinguished historian quoted, will appear strongly contrasted with the uncandid and inaccurate statements made by two celebrated French military writers, as to the numerical force of De Laborde's division on this occasion, which, as Colonel Napier justly remarks, cast ridicule upon a really glorious deed of arms.

General Foy, in his account of this action, intimates that De Laborde had not above 2,500 men, including the three companies detached to his right; while General Thiébauld declares that only 1,900 combatants were present. Histoire de la Guerre de la Péninsule.  
Relation de l'Expédition du Portugal.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, in his Despatch, states that he had reason to believe the enemy's force consisted of about 6,000 men; in which belief, Colonel Napier informs us, he was strengthened by the information gained from a wounded French officer during the action: but the latter writer has considered it safer to rate them at 5,000 men, although at Alcobaça they may have been as many as 6,000; first, because of the difficulty in forming a judgment of an enemy's force by the eye, when he is skilfully posted; and, as in the present case, desirous of appearing stronger than Col. Napier's History.

August, 1808. he really was; secondly, his force being diminished by the battalion companies of the 4th Swiss sent to Peniché, and the three companies detached to Bombarral, Cadaval, and Segura; and thirdly, De Laborde himself, after the Convention, positively denied that he had so many as 6,000 at Roliça.

To arrive as near as possible at a just conclusion, it may be as well to examine more closely the statements of the French historians upon this point.

Relation de  
l'Expédition  
du Portugal,  
chap. iv. p.  
175.

General Thiébault informs us that, independent of five pieces of cannon and 150 Chasseurs à cheval of the 26th regiment, De Laborde's division was formed of two brigades, composed as follows: that of General Brenier, of the two battalions of the 70th regiment; and that of General Thomières, of the 2d provisional regiment of light infantry, and of one battalion of the 4th Swiss regiment: and this is corroborated by General Foy in his History.

Now, by a reference to Thiébault's "Pièces Justificatives," at the end of his Relation, No. I., page 229, and the following pages, containing the composition, organization, and force of the French army of Portugal, the strength of every brigade and regiment under Marshal Junot's orders, may be accurately ascertained; and this Thiébault declares, so far as the numbers, to have been the state of the French army on the 15th July, 1808. From this it appears that—

The 1st and 2d battalions of the 70th regiment on that day consisted of . . . . .	2,358
The 2d provisional regiment of light infantry, (composed of the 3d battalions of the 12th and 15th Légers) . . . . .	2,558
Fourth Swiss regiment, 1st battalion . . . . .	985
26th Chasseurs à cheval (present at Roliça, according to Thiébault) . . . . .	150
And supposing the number of artillery to the five guns about . . . . .	150
Total . . . . .	6,201

In the short space of one month, it is not probable that any material diminution could have occurred in these regiments; and the French



writers not having informed us, as no doubt they would have been careful to do, if any were left behind, we may reasonably suppose, upon General Thiébault's showing, that this was about the actual strength of De Laborde's force, and that, with the exception of the detachment sent to Peniché, the whole were present on the day of battle. August, 1808.

The battalions of the army of Portugal had each nine companies, the imperial decree reducing the battalions of infantry to six companies, having been issued posterior to the formation of Junot's corps. Therefore, supposing the seven companies of the 4th Swiss sent to Peniché to have been about 765 men, the force actually present at Roliça, including the three companies detached to Bombarral, Cadaval, and Segura, may, upon General Thiébault's own authority, be safely estimated at about 5,400 men, which very closely agrees with the number stated by Colonel Napier. Foy, Hist. de la Guerre de la Péninsule.

The loss of the French at Roliça, was 600 killed and wounded; among the latter was General De Laborde himself. The British had 4 officers and 66 men killed, 19 officers and 316 men wounded, and 4 officers and 70 men missing; making a total of 479. This was the first field action in which the spherical case shot, invented by Colonel Shrapnel of the Royal Artillery, had been used; and their wonderful efficacy was proved by the fact, that amongst the dead left by the French upon the field, many had three or four musket or carbine balls in their bodies. The fighting on this day lasted about eight hours, having continued from nine o'clock in the morning, until near five o'clock in the afternoon. Thiébault. Col. Napier's History.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, having received intelligence that Loison's division was at Bombarral, took up a position for the night, in an oblique line to that which he had just forced, his left resting upon a height near the field of battle, and his right covering the road to Lourinha. Before nightfall, he was informed that Generals Anstruther's and Ackland's divisions, accompanied by a large fleet of store-ships, were off the coast, the dangerous nature of which rendered it necessary to provide for their safety by a quick disembarkation. He therefore resolved to seek some convenient post, that, being in advance of his present position, would likewise enable him to cover the landing of these reinforcements. On the 18th he marched to Lourinha, whence he communicated with General Anstruther, and on the 19th reached Vimiero, which, from its vicinity to the coast, appeared to Col. Landmann's Historical Observations on Portugal. Col. Napier's History. Sir A. Wellesley's Despatch.



August, 1808. him the position best calculated to secure the junction with that General, at the same time that it was a march in advance on his route. Here, therefore, he halted, and detached two brigades to cover the disembarkation of the troops. On account of the calms, the fleet, which had anchored off the Burlings, could not stand in until late on the 19th. General Anstruther, however, effected the landing that evening, at the Bay of Maccira; and on the 20th joined the army at Vimiero, and took up his position in the advanced guard. General Ackland arrived on the evening of the 20th, and his brigade was immediately disembarked. The army, thus reinforced, amounted to 16,000 men, with eighteen pieces of artillery, exclusive of Colonel Trant's Portuguese.

Col. Napier's  
History.

During the 19th and 20th the French cavalry were very active, and patrolled frequently up to the British position, hemming the army round so closely, that no exact information of Junot's movements could be obtained, except that he was strongly posted with his whole force at Torres Vedras, and only to be approached by a long and difficult defile, through which the army must penetrate to reach the crest of the mountain: there was, however, a road leading between the sea-coast and Torres Vedras, which, turning the latter, opened a way to Mafra. Sir Arthur resolved upon marching by this road on the morning of the 21st, and gaining the heights of Mafra with a strong advanced guard; while the main body, seizing some advantageous heights four or five miles short of that town, would be in a position to intercept the French line of march to Montachique. The army was therefore re-organized during the 20th in eight brigades of infantry, and four weak squadrons of cavalry, and every preparation made for the next day's enterprise. But at this critical period Sir Harry Burrard arrived in the Brazen frigate, off the Bay of Maccira, and immediately assumed the chief command, forbidding any offensive movement until the arrival of the troops under Sir John Moore. Sir Arthur Wellesley repaired on board the frigate, and, representing to Sir Harry Burrard the actual state of affairs, earnestly remonstrated with him upon this unfortunate decision, but in vain. Sir Harry remained fixed in his determination, and the orders to advance, which had been issued to the army, were countermanded. Instructions were likewise despatched to Sir John Moore, directing him to repair to Maccira Bay, there to disembark his troops.

Col. Napier's  
History.

Meanwhile, the French had been actively engaged in making preparations for a general action. August, 1808.

De Laborde occupied the position of Montachique on the 18th, but was recalled by Marshal Junot to Torres Vedras, where he arrived on the 19th, and found that position occupied by the General-in-Chief, with the division of Loison. Thiébault  
Rédaction de  
l'Expédition  
du Portugal.

That General, being employed in suppressing the insurrections in the Alemtejo, had marched from Estremoz to Elvas, and at the latter place received one of several despatches sent from Junot, containing directions for him to take post at Abrantes: he therefore marched from Elvas to Arronches on the 5th; on the 6th to Portalegre; on the 7th he arrived at Tolosa; the 8th, at Casa Branca; and on the 9th he reached Abrantes. Thiébault. Here he received further orders to join De Laborde at Leiria, and with that intention recommenced his march on the 11th, and that evening halted at Thomar; but learning at this place that Sir Arthur Wellesley was at Leiria, and by this movement had cut the line of communication between him and De Laborde, thus causing him the loss of several forced marches, he fell back on the 12th to Torres Novas, and on the 13th reached Santarem, where he was compelled, by the exhausted state of his troops, to halt until the 15th. The sufferings of his corps during these forced marches were dreadful, and the consequent losses very great. In the Alemtejo, the inhabitants of the towns and villages fled at his approach, and no provisions were to be procured. The heat was excessive, and numbers of the soldiers sank exhausted from privations, which it was found impossible to prevent. Many died from drinking stagnant and unwholesome waters, under the influence of extreme thirst; and all who straggled, or were unable from fatigue, to keep up with the army, were assassinated by the natives. On the march from Abrantes the heat was suffocating; the men fell on all sides; whole companies, unable to proceed, lay upon the roads; and many died of thirst. According to General Thiébault, two-thirds of the division had perished, or were left in the rear, when it reached Santarem.

On the 16th Loison moved to Alcoentre, on the 17th to Cercal, and on the 18th he arrived at Torres Vedras, and, under the orders of the General-in-chief, took up a position to await the arrival of the remainder of the army. Thiébault.



August, 1808. The Duke of Abrantes, previous to his departure from Lisbon, had made arrangements for the safety of the capital, and the forts upon the Tagus. He directed General Kellerman, with a body of troops, to disperse the Portuguese, assembled at Alcacer do Sal; to scour the country as far as Setuval, and, withdrawing the garrison from that place, to collect the whole force south of the Tagus, upon the heights of Almada, where an entrenched camp had been commenced. Having made these dispositions, he left General Travot, in command of the troops in Lisbon, and the forts in its vicinity; and forming the force remaining at his disposal into a reserve, he marched from Lisbon at its head on the night of the 15th, and arrived at Villa Franca on the 16th. At day-break on the 17th the march was resumed, and the troops had proceeded about a league and a half, when a report reached the General that the English squadron had entered the Tagus; in consequence of which, immediate orders were issued for the return of the reserve to Villa Franca, and Junot, leaving General Thiébault in command, departed to assume the direction of Loison's division at Cercal. In the evening, Thiébault received directions to continue the movement upon Torres Vedras, and immediately moved on to Otta, a part of the artillery and the equipage of the army remaining in the rear with an escort. Before day-break on the 18th he marched from Otta, and arrived in the evening at Permunes: here he was ordered to await the arrival of the artillery and stores left behind on the 17th, which did not come up until late on the 19th. The reserve quitted Permunes that evening, and on the morning of the 20th joined the remainder of the army in the position of Torres Vedras.

Thiébault.

Col. Sir J. T.  
Jones's Ac-  
count of the  
War in Spain  
and Portugal.  
Thiébault.  
Foy.

Junot's whole force, thus united, amounted to about 12,000 infantry, from 1,200 to 1,500 cavalry, and twenty-six pieces of artillery, and was formed into two divisions of infantry, a reserve, and one division of cavalry. The first division of infantry, commanded by General De Laborde, was composed of the brigades of Generals Brenier and Thomières, viz., the 2d and 4th light infantry, the 70th and 86th regiments of the line, and the flank companies of the 4th Swiss. The second division, under General Loison, consisted of Generals Solignac's and Charlot's brigades, namely, the 12th and 15th light infantry, and the 32d, 58th, and 82d regiments. The reserve, under the orders of General Kellerman, was composed of four battalions of grenadiers. The cavalry, commanded by General Margaron,

consisted of the 26th chasseurs à cheval, and the 3d, 4th, and 5th provincial regiments of dragoons. August, 1808.

The artillery, commanded by General Taviel, was attached to the different divisions as follows: eight guns, under the orders of Colonel Prost, to the first division; eight, under Colonel D'Aboville, to the second division; and ten, under Colonel Foy, to the reserve. Thiébault. Foy.

Strong reconnoissances were pushed towards the British, with a view to ascertain the exact position of the army; and Junot resolved upon attacking it on the following morning. Towards evening, on the 20th, the cavalry and the greater part of the infantry moved forward to the point whence the road branches off in the directions of Lourinha and Vimiero, about a league from Torres Vedras. The remainder of the infantry and the artillery followed during the night, and at seven on the morning of the 21st, the French army was assembled at the distance of about a league and a half from the British advanced posts, but concealed from their observation by the ground in front.

The ground occupied by the British was by no means a weak position. The village of Vimiero is situated in a valley, through which the little river Maccira flows, and is distant about three miles from the sea. Col. Napier's History. Foy, Hist. de la Guerre.

A little to the northward of the village, a range of strong heights rises abruptly from the valley, taking a northerly direction for about two miles and a half, and then turns backward by the coast, in the form of a crook. This range is bounded on the east, by a wide and very deep ravine, which separates it from another high range, running parallel to it for some distance, and sending out several inferior branches, one of which terminates a little to the north-east of Vimiero. The village of Toledo stands in this ravine, about a mile from the former village; and the road from Vimiero to Lourinha passes along the first range of heights, by the hamlets of Fontanel and Ventoza. Marquis of Londonderry's Narrative. See Plan III. Battle of Vimiero.

To the south-east of Vimiero, and close by the village, is an isolated plateau or table hill, which overlooks all the ground to the south and east for some distance, but is completely commanded by the heights to the west of the ravine, and by a steep mountain-ridge, which, commencing at the coast, sweeps in a half-circle behind the plateau, and close along the left bank of



August, 1808. the Maccira, by which it is separated from the height over which the Lourinha road passes.

Col. Napier's History. Sir A. Wellesley's Report to Sir H. Burrard. As the camp had been taken up only for one night, the army was disposed in the manner most convenient for the troops. The parc of artillery and commissariat stores were in the village of Vimiero; the cavalry, consisting of 240 of the 20th light dragoons, and the Portuguese, were stationed behind the village. The 6th brigade, under Brigadier-general Fane, composed of the 50th, 60th, and 2d battalion, 95th regiments; and the 7th brigade, under Brigadier-general Anstruther, composed of the 2d battalions of the 9th, 43d, 52d, and the 97th, regiments, with six guns, were posted upon the plateau in front. The left of Anstruther's brigade occupied a church and church-yard, which blocked a road leading over the extremity of the height to the village, and Fane's right rested on the edge of the other extremity of the hill, the base of which was washed by the Maccira.

Col. Napier's History. Sir A. Wellesley's Report to Sir H. Burrard. The 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 8th brigades, under Generals Hill, Ferguson, Nightingale, Bowes, C. Craufurd, and Ackland, with eight guns, took up a position on the mountain to the westward of Vimiero, detaching advanced posts upon the road to Mafra. General Hill was posted on the right, and General Ferguson on the left. The 1st brigade was composed of the 5th, the 1st battalion of the 9th, and the 38th regiments; the 2d of the 36th, 40th, and 71st regiments; the 3d of the 29th and 82d regiments; the 4th of the 6th and 32d regiments; the 5th of the 45th and 91st (the 50th being detached with General Fane in advance), and the 8th of the 2d and 20th regiments.

Col. Napier's History. The range of heights on the right bank of the Maccira, was occupied only by the 40th regiment and some picquets.

Col. Napier's History. Before day-break on the 21st, the British army, according to custom, was under arms. At seven o'clock, a cloud of dust was observed beyond the nearest hills to the southward, which, about eight, were crowned by an advanced guard of cavalry; and at the same time a force of infantry, preceded by other cavalry, was descried moving along the road from Torres Vedras to Lourinha, and threatening the left of the British position; column after column followed in order of battle, and it became evident that the right wing of the English was not their object. The 2d, 3d, 4th, and 8th brigades,

were immediately directed to cross the valley behind the village, and take post on the heights occupied by the 40th regiment and the picquets. The 2d and 3d brigades were disposed in two lines across the heights, and facing to the left; consequently forming a right angle with the prolongation of Fane's and Anstruther's front: each of these brigades had three guns. The 4th and 8th brigades were to have furnished a third line, but before the latter could reach the summit the battle had commenced. A line of skirmishers was thrown out from the flanks, upon the face of the descent towards the enemy. The cavalry was drawn up in the plain a little to the right of the village of Vimiero, and the 5th brigade and the Portuguese were detached to the returning part of the crook to cover the extreme left, and to protect the rear of the army. The first brigade, under General Hill, remained on the mountain which the others had just quitted, forming a support for the centre and a reserve for the whole.

August, 1808.

The ground between the two armies was so wooded and broken, that after the French had passed the ridge where they had been first descried, no correct view of their movements could be obtained; and the British being so weak in cavalry, were forced to wait patiently until the columns of attack were close upon them.

Col. Napier's  
History.

#### BATTLE OF VIMIERO.

At ten o'clock, Marshal Junot moved forward to attack the left and centre of the British position, each division of infantry marching in column, with its two brigades in front, and its artillery in the interval. As they approached the plateau, General De Laborde, with the left brigade of his division, under General Thomières, advanced towards that point, while General Brenier led his brigade against the left. Loison's division followed at a short distance in the same order; his right brigade, under General Solignac, marching to support Brenier, while the left moved to sustain De Laborde in his attack upon the British centre. General Kellerman, with the reserve, moved in one body behind Loison, and the cavalry, under Margaron, was divided, part being on the right of Brenier, and part in rear of the reserve. The Artillery, distributed among the columns, opened its fire wherever the ground was favourable.

Thiébault.  
Foy.  
Col. Napier.Col. Napier's  
History.



August, 1868. It was designed that De Laborde's and Brenier's attacks should be simultaneous, but the latter got entangled among the rocks and watercourses in the ravine before mentioned, and De Laborde alone engaged Fane's and Anstruther's brigades, under a heavy and destructive fire of artillery upon his front and flank; for General Ackland's brigade being then in the act of mounting the heights on the left, observing the advance of the columns against the centre, halted, and opened a battery on their right flank.

Col. Napier's  
History.

De Laborde, being now joined by Loison, formed one grand and two secondary columns of attack; of the latter, one advanced against Fane's brigade, while the other endeavoured to penetrate by a road which passed between the ravine and the church, on the extreme left of Anstruther's. But the principal column, headed by De Laborde in person, and preceded by a multitude of light troops, mounted the face of the hill with great gallantry, driving in the English skirmishers. General Fane foreseeing this, and having a discretionary power to use the reserve artillery, directed Colonel Robe to bring it into action, thus forming, with the divisional guns, a most powerful battery, that, by a destructive fire of round, grape, and spherical case shot, shattered the advancing mass, which, formed in column of half-battalions, had now arrived nearly at the summit of the hill, in front of the 50th regiment, at that moment without other support than a single company of the 95th rifle corps. Colonel Walker, who commanded the 50th, seeing little chance of successfully resisting in line the heavy body approaching, made an attempt, with the sanction of General Fane, to turn the left flank of the column. Leaving the left wing of the 50th, and the rifle company in line, forming a front nearly equal to that of the advancing force, the right wing was thrown into echellons of companies of about four paces to the left, and having advanced for a short distance in that order, was ordered to form line on the left company in echellon. The rapidity of the enemy's march, however, brought them nearly in contact with the regiment, when only two companies of the right wing had formed into line, and a very hot though confused fire had already commenced from the flanks of the column. An instant decision became necessary; the two companies in line bore precisely on the angle of the column—Colonel Walker ordered a volley and a charge. The angle was in a moment

Col. Sir J. T.  
Jones's Account of the  
War, Appendix 6.

broken, and forced in on the centre. The drivers of three French guns, a little in advance, alarmed at the firing in their rear, cut their traces, and rushing back on their friends, added to the confusion, which, on the three outer companies of this gallant and distinguished regiment taking part in the charge, became general; and the cavalry at this moment charging the broken mass, converted the disorder into a complete rout, the enemy flying without resistance, pursued by the 50th, and the squadron of the 20th light dragoons under Colonel Taylor. August, 1808.

The attack on the right of the position met with an equally decisive repulse from the bayonets of the 97th regiment, supported by the 52d, which, by an advance in column, took the enemy in flank; the cavalry under Colonel Taylor vigorously pursued the retreating troops for nearly two miles: but the French cavalry under General Margaron, suddenly coming down upon Taylor's horsemen, killed their commander, and compelled them to retreat with considerable loss. Kellerman took advantage of this check, to throw one-half of his reserve into a pine-wood flanking the line of retreat, the other half having been sent to reinforce the attack on the road to the left of the position. Here the 43d regiment sustained the enemy's attack, and General Ackland's brigade then moving to its position on the heights, forced him to retire. The 43d were engaged in a hot skirmish in some vineyards, when Kellerman's grenadiers arrived at a brisk pace, and forced back the advanced companies; but to avoid the artillery on their left, they dipped a little into the ravine, and were taken on the other flank by the guns of Ackland's and Bowes' brigades: then, when the narrowness of the way, and the fire from the artillery was disordering the French ranks, the 43d, rallying in one mass, came furiously down upon the head of the column, and, after a short but desperate fight, drove it back in confusion, having itself suffered very severely. Sir A. Wellesley's Report to Sir H. Burrard.

The French being now discomfited in the centre, retired up the edge of the ravine, in a direction almost parallel to the British line, leaving the road from Vimiero to Torres Vedras open to their opponents. Meanwhile, Brenier being still entangled in the ravine, General Solignac passed along the crest of the ridge above, and came upon Ferguson's brigade, which was posted on the left of the English position. But where the French expected to find a weak flank, they encountered a front of battle on a depth of three Col. Napier's History.



August, 1808. lines, protected by steep declivities on either side; a powerful artillery swept away their foremost ranks, and on their right Craufurd's brigade and the Portuguese were seen marching by a distant ridge towards the Lourinha road, and threatening their rear. Ferguson instantly bore down upon the enemy. The ridge widened as the British advanced; the regiments of the second line, running up in succession, increased the front, and constantly filled the ground, and the French, falling fast under the fire, drew back fighting, until they reached the declivity of the ridge. Their cavalry made several ineffectual efforts to check the advancing troops; Solignac himself was carried from the field severely wounded, and his retiring column, continually out-flanked on the left, was cut off from the line of retreat, and driven into the low ground about the village of Perenza. There six guns were captured, and General Ferguson leaving the 71st and 82d regiments to guard them, was continuing the pursuit of the disordered columns, when Brenier's brigade, suddenly emerging from the ravine, attacked the two battalions, and for a moment succeeded in retaking the captured artillery. But the surprised troops rallied upon the higher ground, poured in a heavy fire of musketry, and, with a shout, returning to the charge, drove the enemy back into the ravine, and remained masters of the guns.

In this charge General Brenier was wounded and taken prisoner; and Ferguson, having completely separated the French brigades, would have forced the greatest part of Solignac's to surrender, if an unexpected order had not obliged him to halt. The discomfited troops then re-formed under the protection of their cavalry, and making an orderly retreat, were soon united to the broken brigades which were falling back on the centre.

Col. Napier's  
History.  
Annals of the  
Peninsular  
Campaigns.  
Col. Land-  
mann's His-  
torical Ob-  
servations on  
Portugal.

It was now twelve o'clock, and the battle was won. Thirteen guns, twenty-three ammunition waggons, with powder, shells, and stores of all descriptions, forty horses, four mules, and 20,000 lbs. of musket ammunition remained in the hands of the British, as trophies of their victory. The French lost one general officer (Brenier), wounded and taken prisoner, and between 2,000 and 3,000 men, killed and wounded. A great number of these fell by the memorable charge of the 50th regiment. Several hundred prisoners also fell into the hands of the victors.

The British lost in this action, 4 officers killed, 35 wounded, and 2

missing; 131 men killed, 499 wounded, and 49 missing, making a total of 720. August, 1808.

Sir Harry Burrard was present during the action, although he had not hitherto interfered with Sir Arthur Wellesley's arrangements. He now, however, assumed the command, and from him the order which arrested General Ferguson in his victorious career had emanated, and by him farther offensive operations were forbidden; for he resolved to wait in the position of Vimiero until the arrival of Sir John Moore; and, notwithstanding Sir Arthur Wellesley's earnest representations as to the expediency of pursuing the French with one portion of the army, and detaching the other by Torres Vedras to Montachique, to cut them off from Lisbon, made to him upon the field of battle, and near the spot where the 50th had stood and fought, and a report from General Ferguson, through his aid-de-camp, Captain Mellish, of the great advantages to be anticipated from the continuance of the advance, Sir Harry Burrard remained fixed in his determination to halt at Vimiero.

Col. Napier's History.

Sir A. Wellesley's Statement, Court of Inquiry.

Col. Landmann's Historical Observations.

Junot, being joined by 1,200 men from Lisbon at the close of the battle, and covered by his cavalry, retreated with order and celerity, and regained the pass of Torres Vedras that evening.

Col. Napier's History.

On the 22d, Sir Hew Dalrymple disembarked, and assumed the chief command of the army. Shortly after his arrival at head-quarters, he was informed that General Kellerman, escorted by a strong body of cavalry, was at the outposts, and demanded an interview. Junot having regained Torres Vedras, and detached Loison with his brigade, and a regiment of cavalry to occupy Mafra, held a council of war, to advise upon the measures to be pursued towards the English; and Kellerman's mission was the result of the consultation.

Thiébault.

That General, being conducted to the quarters of the Commander-in-Chief, demanded a cessation of arms, and proposed the ground-work of a convention for the evacuation of Portugal by the French without further resistance. After much discussion an armistice was concluded; but as the French General stipulated that the Russian fleet in the Tagus should be included, it was necessary that the British Admiral's consent should be obtained to render the treaty valid. By the armistice, the river Zizandra was indicated as the line of demarcation between the British and



August, 1808. French armies ; and the boundary line of the Portuguese was to extend from Leiria to Thomar. The position of Torres Vedras to be occupied by neither army ; and forty-eight hours' notice was to be given of the rupture of the truce.

Thiébault. On the 23d, Kellerman rejoined Junot at Montachique, where his headquarters were established. The wounded, the parc of artillery, the reserve, and two regiments of cavalry had moved with the General to Montachique, and upon receiving intelligence of the armistice, he departed with the same escort for Lisbon, which he entered that day.

Meanwhile, Colonel Murray, Quarter-master-general to the army, was ordered to carry the articles of the proposed Convention to Sir Charles Cotton. Having repaired on board the Admiral's ship, and performed his mission, Sir Charles refused his concurrence, declaring that he would conduct a separate treaty for the Russian ships. The French made this the pretext for a considerable delay in concluding the Convention, and Sir Hew Dalrymple therefore caused it to be notified to Marshal Junot on the 26th, that unless the terms were immediately agreed to, he should in forty-eight hours recommence hostilities. On the same day the army moved forward to Rammalhal, and on the 29th took possession of the pass of Torres Vedras, a part of the army occupying the town, and the remainder being placed in the rear.

On the 30th, the celebrated treaty, called the Convention of Cintra, was concluded at Lisbon. An informality on the part of Junot caused some delay in its ratification. But the British army, notwithstanding, marched to take up the position near Lisbon, assigned to it by the 11th Article of the treaty. Sir Arthur Wellesley's division on the left halted at St. Antonio de Tojal, and head-quarters were established at Cintra.

Sir John Moore, while these events were in progress, had effected the landing of his troops at Maceira Bay, and joined the army under Sir Hew Dalrymple.

On the 2d of September the Convention was signed and perfected, and the first British Campaign in the Peninsula terminated by relieving Portugal from the presence of her invaders.







