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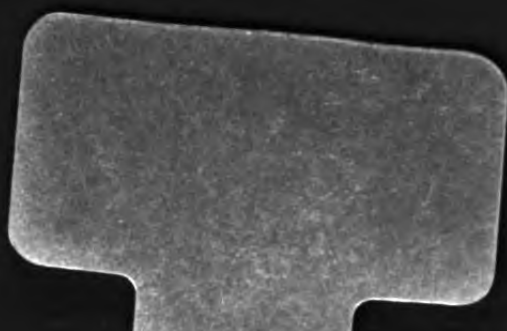
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OF THE
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—
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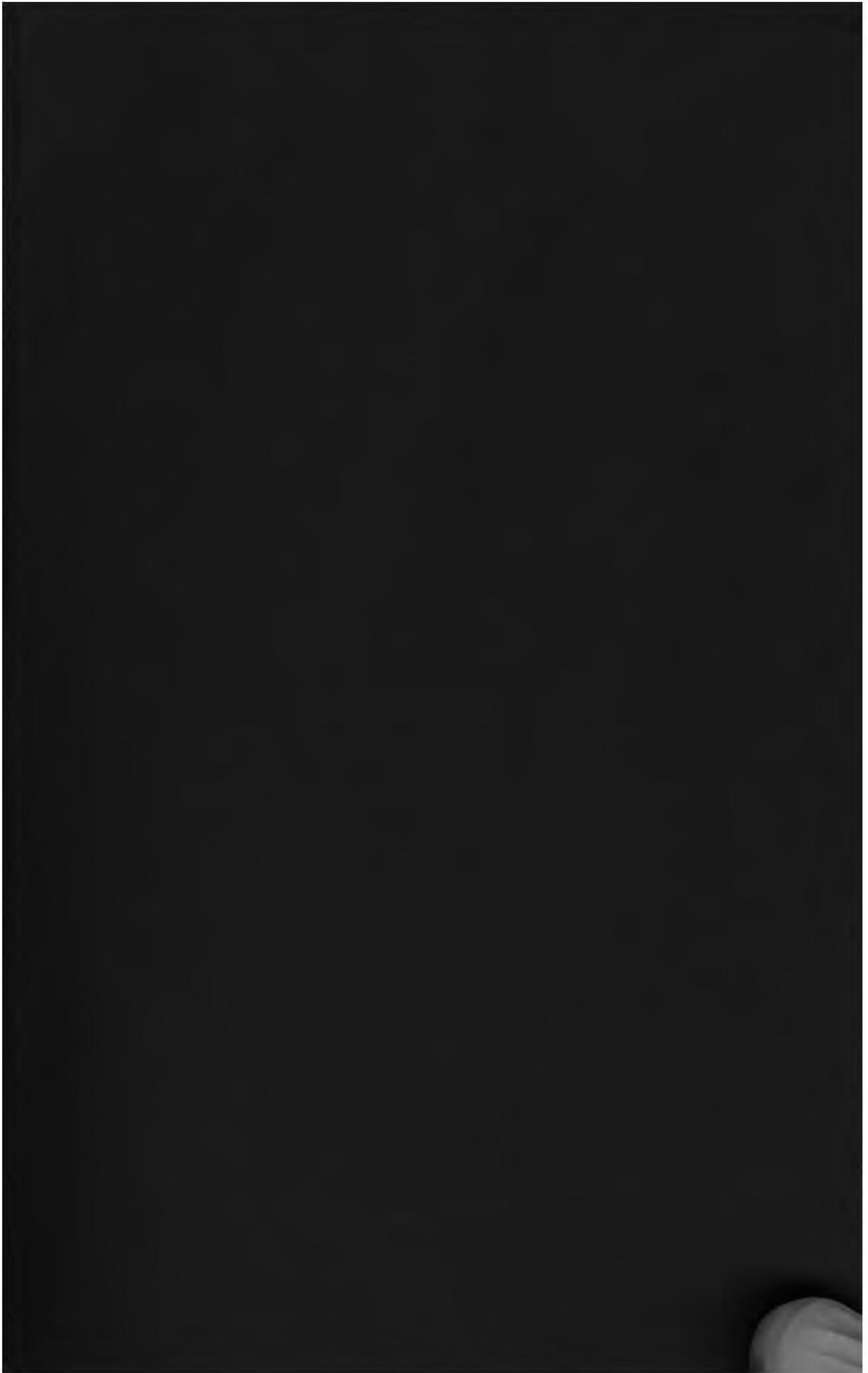
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THE PENINSULAR WAR

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THE
ENGLISH BATTLES
OF THE
PENINSULA

BY

JOHN MACLEOD

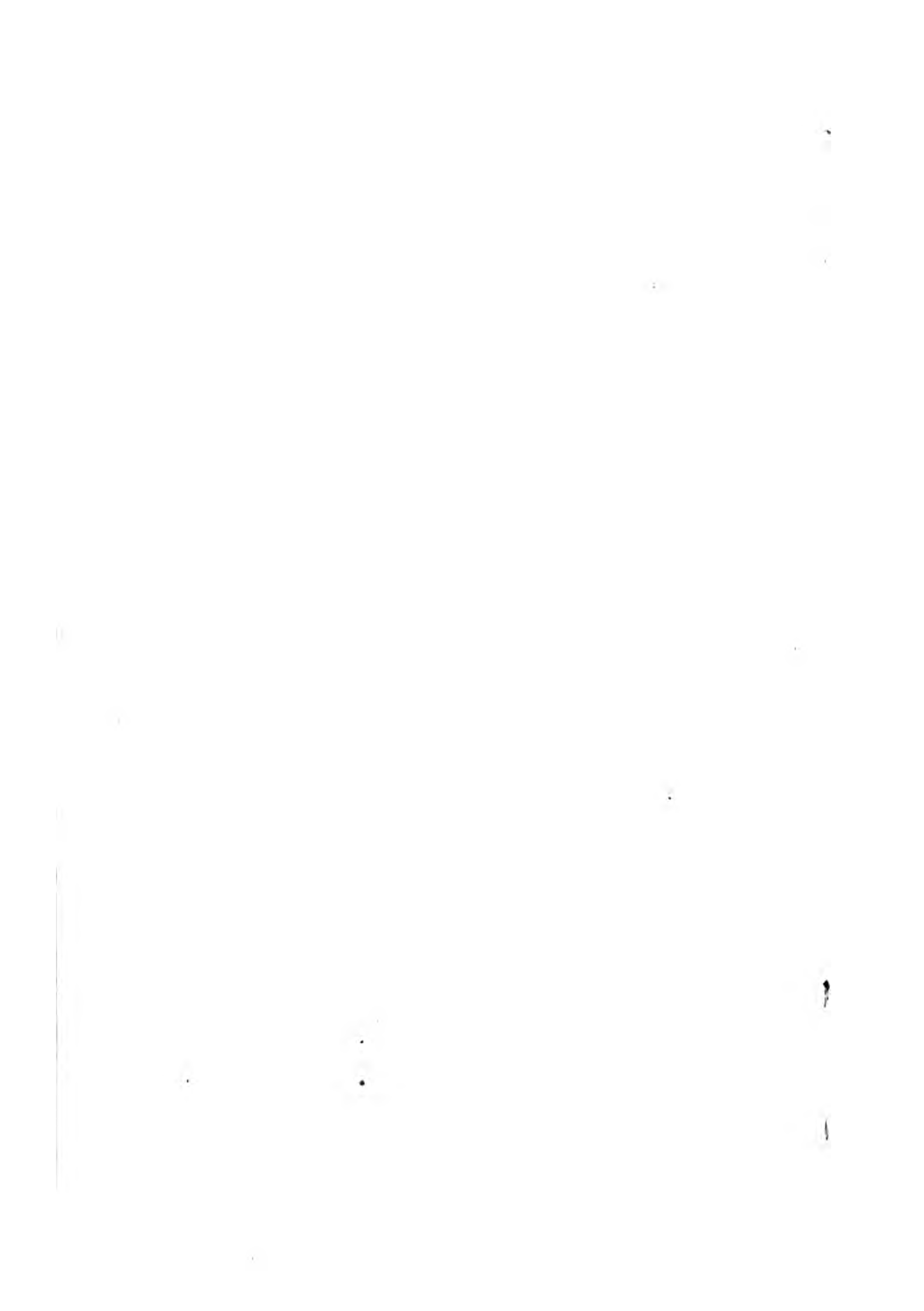
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PREFATORY REMARK

It is almost needless to say that the following Notes are based on Napier's 'History of the Peninsular War.' They were written out somewhat hurriedly for the use of my own Students, who found considerable difficulty in following, and much more in remembering, Napier's long and technical descriptions; and as I believe they may be found useful to others who have no time to master larger works, I venture to offer them for publication.

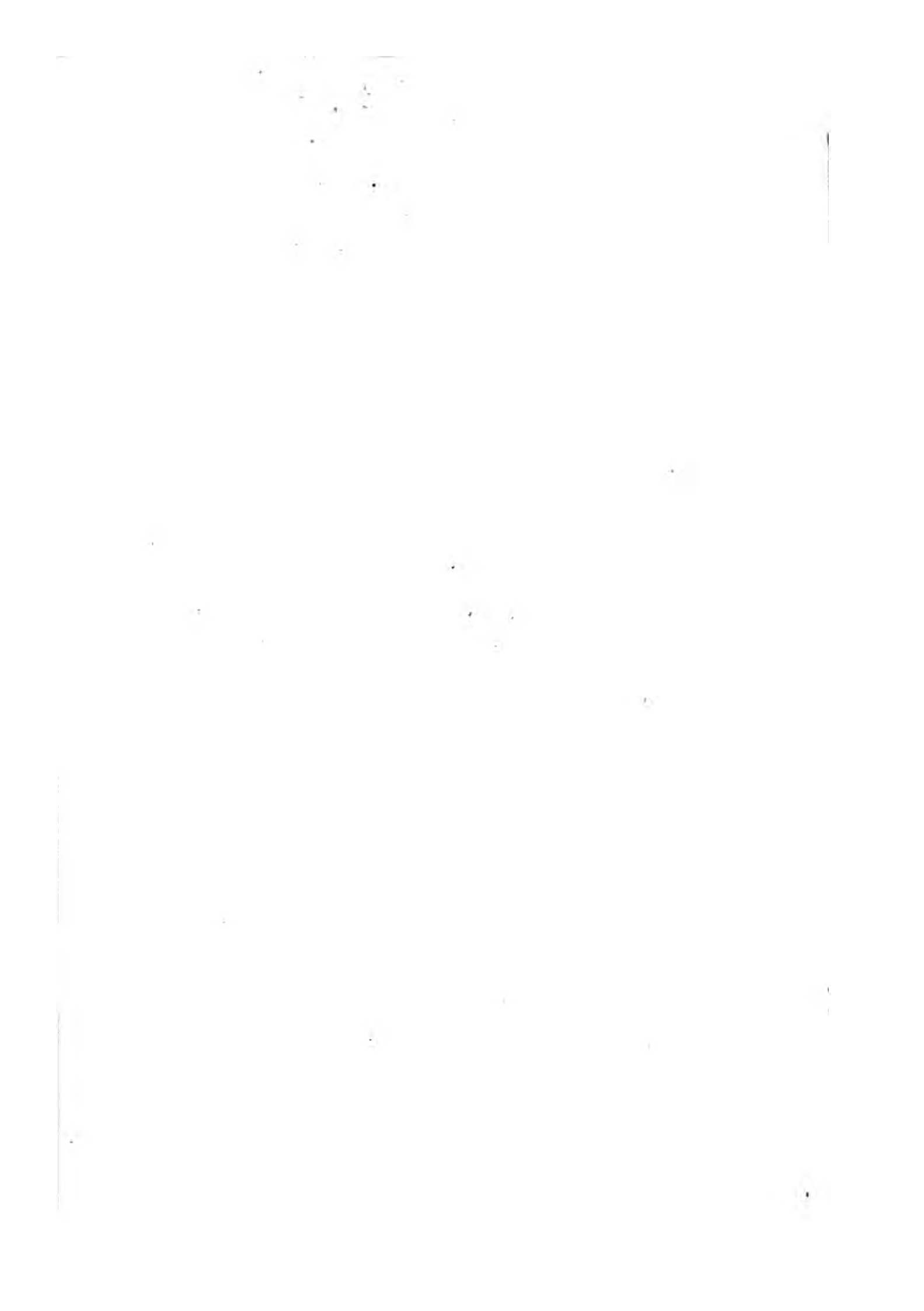
I would advise all Army candidates to make themselves familiar with the Geography of Spain before they study the Battles; for as Geography is the eye of History, it is emphatically so of all Military History.

KENSINGTON: *July* 1879

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THE PENINSULAR WAR.

THE King of Portugal having refused to enforce the Berlin Decree, led Napoleon to make a compact with Spain by which it was agreed to divide Portugal between them. Junot then marched on Lisbon, and Portugal became a French province. This was the circumstance which led to the Peninsular War.

The whole campaign may be divided into three distinct periods:—

I.—1808. From the landing of Wellington in Mondego Bay, with 10,000 British troops, to the Convention of Cintra. In this year the French were beaten in two battles: at *Rorica* under Laborde, and at *Vimieiro* under Junot.

II.—1809. This year is remarkable for Sir John Moore's campaign—an unfortunate one, but ending gloriously in the victory at *Corunna*.

III. From the second landing of Wellington, and his successful encounter with the French at the *Douro*, to the battle of *Toulouse*.

THE CHIEF BATTLES SHORTLY DESCRIBED.



I.—RORIÇA, AUGUST 17, 1808.

GENERALS :—*Laborde* against *Wellington*.

WELLINGTON issued from the town of Obidos with 13,000 infantry, 470 cavalry, and 18 guns, formed in three separate columns of battle. The left column was commanded by Ferguson, and marched by the crest of a mountain ridge (Sierra de Barrogeda) for the purpose of turning the right flank of Laborde's position as well as to oppose Loison, who was heard of in that direction. The right column, consisting of Portuguese soldiers, was commanded by Trant, and moved by the village of St. Amias, with the intention of turning the left flank of the French. The centre, commanded by Wellington himself, moved straight against the French front. As this last column advanced, Fane's brigade, which formed a part of it, drove back the French skirmishers; and thus

the advance of Ferguson's division was connected with the centre. When Ferguson approached the high ground on which Laborde was posted, Hill's brigade, forming also a part of the centre, pushed forward to the attack. At the same time Fane's brigade turned the right flank of the French, while the Portuguese showed a column on the French left, and Ferguson was seen advancing in the rear of Fane. Laborde's position was now become desperate; and he only avoided a disaster by retreating to the rocks of Zambugeira—covering his retreat by cavalry.

This retreat rendered a new order of battle necessary. Trant, continuing his march, turned the left of Laborde's new position; while Ferguson and Fane were directed to penetrate the mountains, and to outflank the enemy's right. Hill advanced against the front, which was a position of great strength, and approachable only through deep ravines. Swarms of skirmishers, followed by supporting columns, bravely pushed their way through the rocky hollows, which resounded with the shouts of the advancing hosts. At length the difficult passes were forced, and the level plain above was gained before the flank movements of Ferguson and Trant took effect.

The 29th was the first to arrive, but did so in disorder; and before they had time to re-form, a battalion broke through them, killing the colonel, and making many prisoners. They soon rallied, however, and, joined by the 9th, maintained their footing in spite of Laborde's efforts to destroy them. Ferguson by this time effected his flank movement, and the French retreated, leaving three guns behind them, and the road to Torres Vedras open to Wellington.

II.—VIMIEIRO, AUGUST 21, 1808.

GENERALS:—*Junot* against *Wellington*.

VIMIEIRO is a village near the coast, and about nine miles distant from Torres Vedras. It was Wellington's object to keep as near the sea-coast as possible in order to protect the landing of British troops; but Junot having rallied the scattered troops of Laborde and Loison was able to forestall him at Torres Vedras. Thus the British stood on the defensive, occupying two mountain ridges and an elevated ground between them, somewhat in the shape of a triangle, the

apex of which masked the village and plain of Vimieiro.

Junot's plan was to attack the left ridge first, being apparently the weakest; then take the central hill in reverse, while he stormed it in front with his main body. He therefore directed Laborde and Loison to attack the central hill, while Brennier was directed to march against the left ridge, which was rendered almost impervious to attack by a deep ravine. This first movement failed; for the French were again and again beaten back from the centre, while the woods and ravines were being filled with their dead and wounded.

Solignac next came upon Ferguson's brigade, posted to the left of the English position, which he unexpectedly discovered to be a very strong one. The artillery swept the front ranks of the advancing French, and the Portuguese, under Trant, appeared to threaten their rear. Ferguson, however, in the very act of victory was attacked by Brennier, who had bravely extricated his men from that terrible ravine where so many had perished. But Brennier's brave soldiers were soon overthrown, and himself made prisoner; and except for Burrard's order to arrest Ferguson's

victorious career, the soldiers of Solignac must have surrendered.

Wellington's plan after the battle was to press Junot with five brigades, under Ferguson, and force him on the Tagus, while Hill and Fane should seize Torres Vedras and cut him off from Lisbon. In that case, Junot must have lost all his artillery; but Burrard prevented the plan being carried out.

If the English had lost this battle they must have been driven into the sea, for there was no other line of retreat.

III.—CORUNNA, JANUARY 16, 1809.

GENERALS :—*Soult* against *Moore*.

AFTER the Convention of Cintra, Sir John Moore took command of the army in Portugal. With 25,000 men he marched in the direction of Valladolid, expecting to form a junction with the allied army of Spain, and with the army under Baird from Corunna. Napoleon, however, appeared suddenly on the scene, scattered the Spanish army in every direction, took Madrid, then

turned upon Moore with 50,000 of his victorious soldiers, while Ney was sent to cut off his retreat on Portugal. It only remained for Moore to retreat on Corunna; and as the Emperor himself was called away to Germany, Soult was ordered to follow up the pursuit of the English General.

In this retreat, which occupied three weeks, Moore suffered no military disaster. On the contrary, he made several successful stands against the enemy, and arrived at Corunna two days before his pursuers. At *Rueda*, and again near *Valladolid*, his officers made more prisoners than they had soldiers to guard them. At *Sahagun* 600 French dragoons were overthrown, and 13 officers were taken prisoners. The same thing happened at *Mayorga*; and at *Benevente* the light cavalry of the Imperial Guard was defeated, and many made prisoners. Equally successful stands were made at *Calcavallos*, at *Constantino*, and at *Lugo*.

At Corunna, Moore, on account of the smallness of his army, was obliged to take his position on a small range abutting on the river Mero, although he saw that it was commanded on either side by two higher ranges. These latter ranges were taken up by the enemy.

When the battle began the French batteries from the higher ground sent their bullets crashing through the English ranks from right to centre. The village of Elvina covered the right flank of the English position, and against it a column of French infantry was sent early in the battle. The English picquets who guarded it were immediately driven out. The 42nd, however, soon came to the rescue and drove the French back into the village, and, fighting their way through the streets, forced them out on the other side. Elvina thus became the centre of battle; but as Moore was watching its progress on right and left he was struck from his horse by a cannon-shot and mortally wounded. Nevertheless he lived to see the French driven step by step from Elvina.

On the left the enemy was driven from the commanding ridge he occupied; and then Paget's division, which had been reserved by Moore to deliver his counter-stroke on the left, poured into the valley with conquering violence, overthrew the French dismounted dragoons, who had descended, and would have stormed the rock battery above if Fraser's division (as Moore intended) had supported Paget's. As it was, the French were entirely defeated, and might

have been utterly wrecked if the English General Hope had known their want of ammunition.

IV.—TALAVERA, JULY 27, 1809.

GENERALS :—*Victor, Jourdan, &c.*, against
Wellington.

AFTER the battle of Corunna Craddock held Lisbon, Beresford commanded the south of Portugal with a native army, and Soult held Oporto. In the beginning of summer, however, Wellington was sent out to succeed Craddock. His main object was to drive Soult out of the Peninsula. He therefore directed his march on Oporto, and, having crossed the Douro, he drove the French general out of that town. Wellington now passed triumphantly into Spain, and in high hopes of entering Madrid; but the French generals, Victor, Jourdan, Joseph, and Soult, gathered round him at Talavera and prevented such an easy result.

Wellington chose his battle-field at Talavera, from which Victor had just retired. He strengthened his position by field works in a line perpendicular to the Tagus; and his whole front of battle was about two miles long. The Spanish

infantry, which occupied one-third of the whole line, and by far the strongest part of it, were posted on the right and next to the village of Talavera. A small hill, surmounted by a large redoubt, closed the Spanish left, and from thence the line of battle was continued by the British forces under the command of Campbell, Sherbrooke, and Donkin. Joseph ordered Sebastiani to attack the right wing of the allies, the cavalry to attack their centre, while Victor was to fall upon their left. In this order the French army advanced, and at the first shot fired the Spanish soldiers made a disgraceful retreat! Donkin, who crowned a hill on the extreme left of the allies, with only one brigade, made a brave stand against Victor; but he was outflanked and taken in his rear, when Hill came to his assistance and drove back the French. This ended the first day's fighting, it being evening when it began.

The hill which had been so hotly disputed on the previous day now became the centre on which victory turned. Sebastiani's troops, who had so easily beaten the Spanish, now came forward to join those of Victor, and, falling on Campbell's division like a tempest, they were twice hurled back with great slaughter. Then the 23rd Light

Dragoons made such a terrible charge as struck the French Grenadiers with amazement. Nevertheless the disputed hill was again furiously attacked, and large gaps were also made in the British centre by the well-directed fire of Victor's battery. It seemed at this moment as if victory inclined towards the French, for Sherbrooke's division was broken and routed; but Wellington, seeing that the crisis of battle was at hand, sent down the 48th from the hill, and this brave regiment met the advancing French hosts with such a shout and a charge as is heard and seen only when victory is certain. The King, seeing himself baffled at all points, withdrew from the field. So ended the bloodiest battle of the Peninsula.

V.—BUSACO, SEPTEMBER 27, 1810.

GENERALS:—*Massena* against *Wellington*.

AFTER the battle of Talavera Wellington had no alternative but to retreat into Portugal. The two lines of retreat were the Coa and the Mondego, both of which were threatened by Massena, who

had now a large army in Portugal. After some skirmishes on both these lines, Wellington made a stand on the Sierra de Busaco, a mountain some miles in length and on the right bank of the Mondego. The left of this position was quite unassailable, and the right was flanked by the river.

The English army took up its position in order of battle as follows: Hill's corps was placed on the right, Picton's third division on the left, and Leith with the fifth division between them. The reserves under Spencer and Cole were spread out to the extreme left and rear. Opposed to these, on the French side, were Ney, Junot, and Regnier's divisions.

The first onset was made by Regnier, who, on the morning of the 27th, attacked Picton's position. So sudden, furious, and resolute was this attack made that in half an hour the French turned the right of Picton's division, swept away everything before them, and took possession of the high ground between Picton and Leith. The French now threatened to sweep the summit of Basaco clear; but Wellington ordered a battery to rake their flank with grape, while a heavy musketry poured into their front. No flesh and

blood could stand that death shower, and as the French battalions reeled under it they were furiously charged by the 88th regiment. Then the whole living mass of friend and foe rolled down the side of the mountain, and the enemy was so far beaten.

Nevertheless some of the French battalions who first gained the ascent managed to get into the higher rocks in the English rear; but Leith, observing this, sent a brigade to the aid of Picton, and the 9th regiment under Cameron quickly drove the French grenadiers from the rocks. Victory was now certain, for while the English concentrated at this point, Regnier was without reserves.

Ney's attack on the English right was equally fruitless. The French soldiers, indeed, ascended the side of the hill with indomitable courage, driving the English skirmishers before them; but just as their shouts of victory told that they had nearly gained the summit they were charged by two regiments in reserve (43rd and 52nd) and hurled back in irretrievable confusion.

VI.—BAROSA, MARCH 5, 1811.

GENERALS:—*Victor* against *Graham*.

BAROSA is a ridge overlooking a rugged plain. This plain is bounded on the left by the sea and on the right by the forest of Chiclana. In this forest Victor was entrenched.

Graham's plan was to hold Barosa in strength; but Peña, the Spanish general nominally in command, ordered him across the plain to another ridge beyond it in front. Peña himself marched in another direction, and left only his baggage and five battalions in Barosa! The French general, observing these absurd movements, made sure of victory, and at once issued from the forest of Chiclana to the plain, and, leading his troops in person, he took Barosa on the rear, dispersed the guard and the baggage, and captured three Spanish guns!

Major Brown, however, retired in good order to the plain, and immediately sent after Graham for orders. That veteran soldier's reply was, *Fight!* while he himself at once faced about and regained the plain. But, to his astonishment, he

saw the Spanish flying everywhere and Peña nowhere, while Laval was pressing on his own left flank! Without hesitation he made a counter attack, and ten guns under Duncan opened a ravaging fire on Laval's columns. The rest of the troops had only time to form two great masses without regard to regiments; one of these under Wheatley dashed against Laval, while the other under Dilkes went vehemently against Ruffin. The artillery played terribly on both sides; but when the opposing masses drew near, a fierce charge of the 87th regiment overthrew the first French line, and, hurling it back on the rear ranks, broke them also.

Brown, who had received the laconic order *to fight*, obeyed it vigorously, and Dilkes coming up to his assistance, the French were driven from Barosa height. The enemy now retired from each part of the field, and the British soldiers stood victorious on the hill. During the fight Peña looked calmly on, although he had numerous cavalry and artillery under his command!

VII.—FUENTES D'ONOR, MAY 5, 1811.

GENERALS:—*Massena* against *Wellington*.

MASSENA withdrew his forces from before Torres Vedras in March, and Wellington pursued him all the way to Fuentes d'Onor, where the battle of that name was fought.

The ground which Wellington occupied at this battle is a table-land between the Turones and Duas Casas. His right wing, consisting of the first and third divisions, stood behind Fuentes d'Onor; his left, consisting of the fifth division, at Fort Conception; and his centre, the sixth division, near the village of Alameda. For two days before the battle, the right and centre of this position were threatened by the French, and indeed Loison at one time drove five battalions of the British out of Fuentes; but reinforcements having been sent from the main position, the French were driven out of the village, and across the Duas Casas, which flowed in a deep ravine in front of Wellington's line of battle.

The battle was begun by a brilliant cavalry charge, in which the French turned the English

right and cut off Ramsay's battery of horse artillery. Ramsay, however, fought his way desperately through the French cavalry, and ultimately got clear with his battery; but the position above Fuentes d'Onor was lost. At this critical moment the light division formed squares, checked the dashing progress of the French cavalry, and made their colonel prisoner.

At the same time Drouet assailed the village of d'Onor, which was occupied by three British regiments. These were soon overmastered, and such of them as were not dispersed or made prisoners took up a strong position in the higher part of the town which they held stoutly to the end.

The French, and especially their horsemen, fought more splendidly in this battle than in any other of the war. They turned the British right, and beat our cavalry back; they forced the army to abandon three miles of ground, and compelled Wellington to change his front. Fuentes d'Onor, however, was not a battle of skill on either side: it was a promiscuous fight of dash, daring, and extreme gallantry. Napier thinks that if Napoleon, or even Ney, had been there, the result would have been a disaster. But they were not!

VIII.—ALBUERA, MAY 18, 1811.

GENERALS:—*Soult* against *Beresford*.

SOULT, having advanced from Seville to raise the siege of Badajos, was defeated by Beresford in the battle of *Albuera*.

Albuera is the name of a village, of a river, and of an elevated ground or ridge. The Albuera ridge, about four miles long, having the Albuera river in front, and the Aroya Val de Sevilla stream in the rear, was the position taken up by the allied army under Beresford. The village, which was in advance of the centre, was occupied by the German troops under Alten, and the bridge was commanded by a battery.

The Anglo-Portuguese army consisted of 30,000 infantry, besides cavalry and artillery; but of these only 7,000 were British. The second division, under Stewart, and behind it the fourth division, were drawn up so that their right commanded a central hill in the line of battle. Blake's dragoons and Cole's Spanish troops formed the right of the line, and the Portuguese squadrons formed the left. The re-

erves were massed behind the central hill, which was the key of the position.

Half way between Beresford's right and Soult's left there was a hill, which the former general neglected, expecting the main attack to be made on his centre and through the village; but during the night Soult, unobserved, made good use of this hill, placing behind it the 5th corps, his heavy cavalry, and the greatest part of his artillery—and all within a cannon-shot of Beresford's right wing!

Soult's plan was first to attract Beresford's attention by a vigorous attack on the village and the bridge, and then, when the principal attack should be developed, to roll up his right wing on the centre and cut off his retreat.

As soon as the action began Beresford saw that the attacks on his front were mere feints; he therefore ordered Blake to throw his first and second lines at right angles to their original position. He also strengthened his centre by drawing thither the Portuguese from his left wing. But before these movements were effected on the right the French infantry, supported by light cavalry, were amongst them. Thus the enemy was confronting him everywhere in order of

battle while his own heterogeneous army was still forming! The Spaniards of course at once drew back, and it looked as if the whole army was giving way and doubling up. Four French regiments of Hussars and Lancers had by this time gained the right flank, took the disordered Spanish brigade in rear, destroyed two-thirds of their number, and, sweeping along the ridge, captured six guns. All was confusion on the height.

At this crisis the 29th English regiment, smiting and breaking through the flying Spaniards, came up resolutely and in order; Colborne with the 31st regiment kept the height; and the British artillery was coming into action. Then a dreadful fire opened on the French masses. Cannons charged with grape at half range smote every head of formation as they endeavoured to open their ranks. Finally the Fusilier battalions, under Cole, surmounted the hill, recaptured the guns, and, closing on their powerful enemies, they drove them to the edge of the height, and with a terrible shout, in which victory rang, hurled them down the slopes of the fatal hill. The village, which had been abandoned during the engagement, was reoccupied and the battle of Albuera won.

IX.—CIUDAD RODRIGO, JAN. 19, 1812.

SIEGE.

THE campaign of this year was opened by the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, a strong fortress on the frontiers of Spain and Portugal, containing the battering train of Marmont.

The French army at this time was disposed in the following manner: Dorsenne, who held Rodrigo as a place of arms, threatened Portugal from the north; Soult, who held Badajos for a similar purpose, threatened Portugal from the south; and Marmont, who held a central position, could advance to the succour of either of the other two as the case required. The King had also an army of his own around Madrid. Napoleon, however, was obliged to withdraw many of his best troops from Spain on account of his Russian expedition, and Wellington seized the opportunity which this occasioned.

Rodrigo stands on high ground overlooking the right bank of the Agueda. Its siege was begun by storming Fort Francisco, a palisaded redoubt on the side farthest from the river, and supported by the fire of two guns and a howitzer

placed on the roof of a convent within the suburb of Francisco. On the evening of the 8th, Colborne, taking some companies of the light division, stormed the fort with so much unexpected fury that the ramparts were quickly mounted and a great number of the defenders made prisoners.

Trenches were now begun to shelter the besiegers, for the fort itself was untenable, covered as it was with shot and shell from the convent. Several days were passed in the trenches and in desultory fighting; but the approaches were steadily making progress by sapping until the 13th, when the convent of Santa Cruz, which covered the redoubt, was taken. The breaching batteries were now brought forward, and twenty-five heavy guns opened against the ramparts. The French replied with fifty pieces, and the scene which presented itself at this earth-shaking combat was terrific but sublime. The thunder of the artillery, the hissing of the shells, and the sparkle of the fuses through the heavy wreaths of smoke which overarched the battlements, foretold the doom of Ciudad Rodrigo. On the evening of the 14th, when this infernal bellowing ceased, the 40th regiment assaulted and carried the convent of Francisco, thus making a lodgment within the suburb.

The work of destruction went on till the 19th, when both breaches were rendered practicable. Wellington pointed out the lesser breach to Major Napier, who, with a band of volunteers from the light division, went to the assault. It was so narrow at the top, and so choked up with dead and wounded men, that the assailants were hemmed in and staggered. Napier himself fell wounded, but in doing so he cheered his men and shouted out to them to use the bayonet. They did, and the breach was taken by the 43rd and 52nd. Then, wheeling round to the support of those who were making a furious assault on the great breach, they drove the French from the ramparts into the streets, and finally into the castle, where the governor surrendered.

X.—BADAJOS, APRIL 6, 1812.

FINAL SIEGE.

THE apex of the angle formed by the confluence of the Rivillas and the Guadiana, is crowned with a high rock which is surmounted by a castle. This was the point of defence on the French extreme left. The eastern front of

resistance terminated in what is known as the Trinidad bastion, the whole line being well guarded by outworks. It was determined by Wellington to attack the Trinidad bastion first, and from thence to breach the bastion of Santa Maria.

As is usual in all sieges, the fortifications were approached by sapping and mining, and the Engineers were thus employed on the nights of the 17th, 18th, and 19th March, interrupted at intervals by the fire of the enemy. Philipon, the able French Engineer, made a battery on the right bank of the Guadiana during the night of the 20th, with which he raked the English trenches in the morning; and this destructive fire, together with the floods, caused some delay in the siege operations. On the night of the 26th, the garrison of Picurina Hill, an outwork, was stormed and captured in one hour, but the carnage was frightful. Some days were again spent in the trenches; and Soult meanwhile, advancing from Cordova, was preparing for battle. Marmont was also concentrating at Salamanca and threatening Ciudad Rodrigo, which was defended only by the Spaniards. Wellington was therefore determined to leave the trenches with two divisions to guard

them, and give battle to the French general on the old ground of Albuera; but so skilfully was Soult out-mancœuvred that he retired without striking a blow.

On the 6th April the breaches were practicable, and the assault was ordered. The light division was to assault the Santa Maria, and the fourth division the Trinidad bastion. The British soldiers then, like a mighty wave, threw themselves against the forts, but only to be again and again broken and beaten back. Never was an assault so terrific, and never did men care less for life. At the top of these fearful breaches sword blades were fixed in wooden beams, and behind these were finished trenches and mounted parapets. The roar and flash of cannon showed the sword-bladed breaches like the mouths of infernal dragons; and the Trinidad bastion had at last to be abandoned as impossible. Nevertheless the town was surrounded with a fiery wall. The third division, however, had by this time gained the castle, and a detachment of the 4th regiment poured into the town and took the French in reverse at the breaches. Then Phillipon, wounded himself and seeing all was lost, retreated across the bridge and entered San Christoval, a fortress

on the right bank of the Guadiana. Next day he surrendered to Lord Fitzroy Somerset.

XI.—SALAMANCA, JULY 1812.

GENERALS:—*Marmont* against *Wellington*.

AFTER the capture of Badajos the war was carried on in Spain.

On June 13, Wellington advanced to the Tormes and began the siege of the forts of Salamanca, which he found to be much stronger than he anticipated. Nevertheless, they were stormed on the 26th, and the Tormes was crossed. Marmont then retreated by the line of the Duero, his aim being to cut off all communication between Rodrigo and Salamanca, and drive the allies back into Portugal. A month later on he managed to out-manceuvre Wellington, who meditated a retreat; but, Marmont having discovered his weakness, forced on him the battle of Salamanca.

This battle was fought in the front of a forest, and Wellington's attack was so sudden and unexpected that before the French could fall into

line Packenham dashed into them with the third division and threw their left wing into disorder, while Marmont himself fell wounded. Packenham continued his conquering career, but the French began to gain ground on the English left. The left wing of the enemy being now entirely broken, Clausel, who commanded the centre, fell furiously on Packenham and dispersed his Portuguese. This nearly turned the tide of battle ; but victory was to the general who had the best reserves in hand at this critical moment. Wellington at once brought up the sixth division, and by a successful charge the scales were turned in his favour. Clausel, now wounded, was repulsed in the centre, but Mancune still fought bravely and kept his men well together. He, however, was defeated by the troops under Clinton ; and in less than an hour from the beginning of the battle Wellington stood on the field a greater conqueror than he had ever been before.

Clausel, who saved the French centre, was driven back on Burgos, and the English general entered Madrid.

[Wellington's retreat from Madrid ought to be well studied ; it is beyond the scope of these notes.]

XII.—VITTORIA, JUNE 21, 1813.

GENERALS :—*Joseph, &c.*, against *Wellington*.

IN May 1813 Wellington gave 40,000 troops to Graham to penetrate to the Esla river in Spain, and to turn the line of the Duero. He himself was to force the Tormes with 30,000 men, pass the Duero, unite with Graham, and in one great front line drive the French to the Pyrenees. This was a grand design, and so confident did the English general feel in its accomplishment that on passing the frontier he raised himself in the saddle and exclaimed ‘*Adieu, Portugal!*’

The French point of concentration was Valladolid; the Esla covered their right wing, the Tormes their left, and the Duero their centre. Wellington, with extraordinary rapidity, mastered the line of the Duero, and placed himself upon the Esla before the enemy knew that he was in movement. Joseph, feeling himself in desperate straits, resolved to retire behind the Ebro, and concentrate his depôts, baggage, stores, and artillery in Vittoria. Thus it was that all the encumbrances of his armies were gathered together

in that basin, eight miles broad by ten long, Vittoria being at the further end. The Zadora river flows, with rugged banks, through this basin towards the Ebro. The region round about was broken and mountainous, and favourable for irregulars.

On June 21, Reille took the extreme right to defend the passage of the Zadora, Drouet and Gazan commanded the centre, lining the Zadora also, and the King's Guards formed a reserve behind them. Wellington's design was to shut up the French centre behind the Zadora and the mountains.

Hill, having the second British division with cavalry and guns, forced the Zadora, and won a village in front of Gazan's line. At the same time Graham's attack was developed, and Joseph, finding both his flanks in danger, ordered his reserves to file off towards Vittoria. Meanwhile Hill pressed the enemy in front, and the banks of the Zadora presented a continuous line of fire; Colville's brigade of the third division forded the river and engaged the French right. At the same time Picton and the rest of the third division crossed the front of both armies and took possession of a central hill commanding the

French retreat. The enemy now retired to a second range of heights, but Picton's troops, headed by the riflemen of the third division and Hill's brigades, outflanked them and caused them to retreat in disorder to Vittoria. The action at last became a running fight until the enemy made another stand on the last height, about a mile in front of the town. Here the French cannonade was so terrible that the third division wavered under it; but the fourth carried the hill on the French left. Then all the heights were abandoned, and Joseph retreated in disorder. 'The soldiers were not half beaten, yet never was a victory more complete,' is Napier's observation on this battle. A paradox with some truth in it.

XIII.—SAN SEBASTIAN, SEPTEMBER 1813.

SIEGE.

SOULT, who had been besieging Cadiz, was sent to retrieve the honour of the French; but Hill kept him at bay while the siege of San Sebastian was progressing.

San Sebastian is a fortress built on a sandy isthmus, flanked on the one side by the harbour

and on the other by the river Urumea. A rugged mountain, the Monte Orgullo, rises behind it. General Emanuel Rey took possession of Sebastian just before the battle of Vittoria.

Two attacks were projected : one on the right bank of the Urumea by the Portuguese, and another on the left by the fifth division. San Bartolomeo, a fortified ridge about 600 yards beyond the outward rampart of the town, was the first point of attack. After repeated failures the redoubt and convent of Bartolomeo were stormed on the 17th July by detachments of Portuguese, supported by companies of the 9th British regiment. After this the high curtain, or rampart, which stretched across the isthmus in front of the town was approached by sapping. On the 24th a part of the fifth division under Fraser occupied the trenches in order to assail the great breach, and the 28th regiment under Greville assailed the smaller breach. Fraser, with his Engineer, entered the breach under heavy fire, both of whom were killed among the burning ruins, and many of their followers destroyed. Then a panic ensued and the slaughter was terrible.

The final attack was begun on the 31st

August, when Robinson's brigade arrived at the great breach but were repulsed. At last Graham, directing the fire of 50 heavy pieces on the high curtain, swept the ramparts naked of defenders, and a party of the light division effected a lodgment within the rampart and close to the great breach. A Portuguese company at the same time forded the river under grape fire and assaulted the third breach. The fighting became general, and after a terrific explosion on the ramparts the British broke in and poured into the town.

Nevertheless, the place was not taken, Monte Orgullo still remained unconquered ; but Wellington arriving the day after the assault, September 3, attacked Orgullo with vertical fire, which continued day and night until the 8th, when a tremendous fire was brought to bear upon the fortress from all sides, and then, when San Sebastian was almost annihilated, the governor surrendered. The siege was a long one, occupying sixty-three days.

XIV.—THE PYRENEES, 1813.

VITTORIA was won on the 21st June, and in July, Soult was commanded to succeed Joseph. The French left wing, under Clausel, was at St. Jean Pied de Port; the centre, under Douet, near the heights of Espelette; and the right, under Reille, was overlooking Vera from the mountains on the French side.

Soult determined to concentrate on his *left*, covering his movement by the Nivelle and the Nive, to force Wellington's *right*, blockade Pampluna, and raise the siege of San Sebastian. The first serious engagement took place at Surorem on July 29, which Wellington termed 'bludgeon work.' After some more combats, the English general was victorious in the whole of *Navarre*.

During the second and final storming of Sebastian, Soult fought the battles of the Bidassoa with the covering forces and was beaten. The English forces then crossed the Bidassoa in October, and the war was carried into France. Soult now fell on the defensive, between the upper Nivelle and the sea. His position was a strong

mountainous one, but it was forced by the light division, and both the Nivelle and Nive were passed.

Some engagements took place in front of Bayonne, the last and chief of which was St. Pierre. In this Hill gained most glory.

In January 1814 the Adour was passed, and Soult took a defensive position, with *Orthes* behind his left wing.

XV.—ORTHES, FEBRUARY 1814.

GENERALS:—*Soult* against *Wellington*.

THE position of the French army was a ridge, in the centre of which was a round hill with long and narrow tongues abutting on each side. The front presented a concave, and was covered by a marshy ravine. Behind the left wing was *Orthes* at the foot of another hill.

As a front attack was deemed impossible, it was resolved to take the enemy in flank and drive him into *Orthes*. After some severe fighting on the right and left flanks of the French, their position was found so strong that the allies were driven back on all sides, at the sight of

which Soult exclaimed, 'At last I have him!' At this crisis, Wellington ordered the third and sixth divisions to be thrown *en masse* on the French left, and Colborne with the 52nd regiment to cross the marsh in front, and assail the flank and rear of the French right. The 52nd, whose movements were at first scarcely observed by Soult, carried everything before it. Wellington then was enabled to push forward his cavalry and artillery, and to rake the French army with shot and shell from flank to flank.

Soult was obliged to withdraw his forces and take up a new position; but Hill advancing on his left, turned the town of Orthes and cut off his line of retreat. The French were now compelled to make a hasty retreat across a heathy plain and in the direction of some rivers; but at the bridge of Sault de Navailles, on the *Luy de Bearn*, they were overtaken and charged by Lord Somerset's Hussars under General Cotton. Several hundred men were there sabred, and more than 2,000 threw down their arms. The pursuit then ceased, for the French army appeared to be utterly dispersed.

In this battle Wellington received his only wound during the war.

XVI.—TOULOUSE, APRIL 10, 1814.

GENERALS:—*Soult* against *Wellington*.

AFTER the battle of Orthes, Soult retreated to the foot of the Pyrenees, and at *Tarbes*, which commanded the road between Pau and Toulouse, he reorganised his scattered forces. In fact, both roads leading to Toulouse were now commanded by Soult—that on the English left from Aire by Auch, and that on the English right from Pau by Tarbes. Wellington determined to attack the former. He therefore fixed his headquarters at Aire, having his army on either side of the Adour.

Soult then perceived that it was necessary for his safety to retreat on Toulouse, his *depôt*, and in executing this retreat he was pursued by Wellington, Beresford, and Hill, and beaten in two or three combats. Toulouse was the principal military depôt in the south of France, and commanded the passage of the Garonne. This river flowed on the allies' right, and presented to them the concave side of a loop, at the bottom of which was a bridge masked by the redoubts of St. Cyprien. Beyond the river was Toulouse, pro-

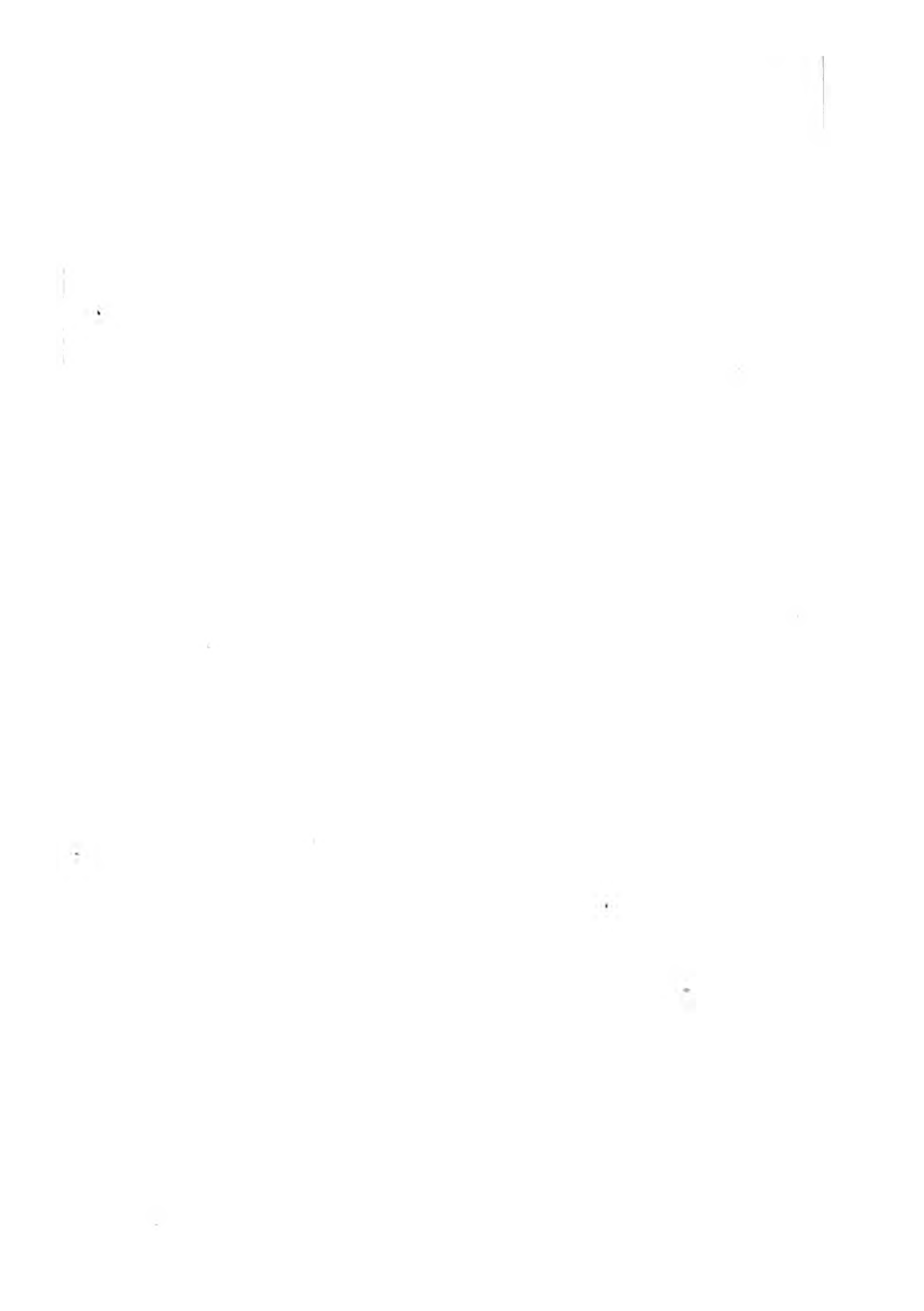
ted by a strong wall and by an exterior line of entrenchments. Below the city the Canal of Languedoc joined the river, and covered the town on the east and north sides, as St. Cyprien did on the west. The southern approach was a plain, commanded by the suburb of St. Michel as an outwork.

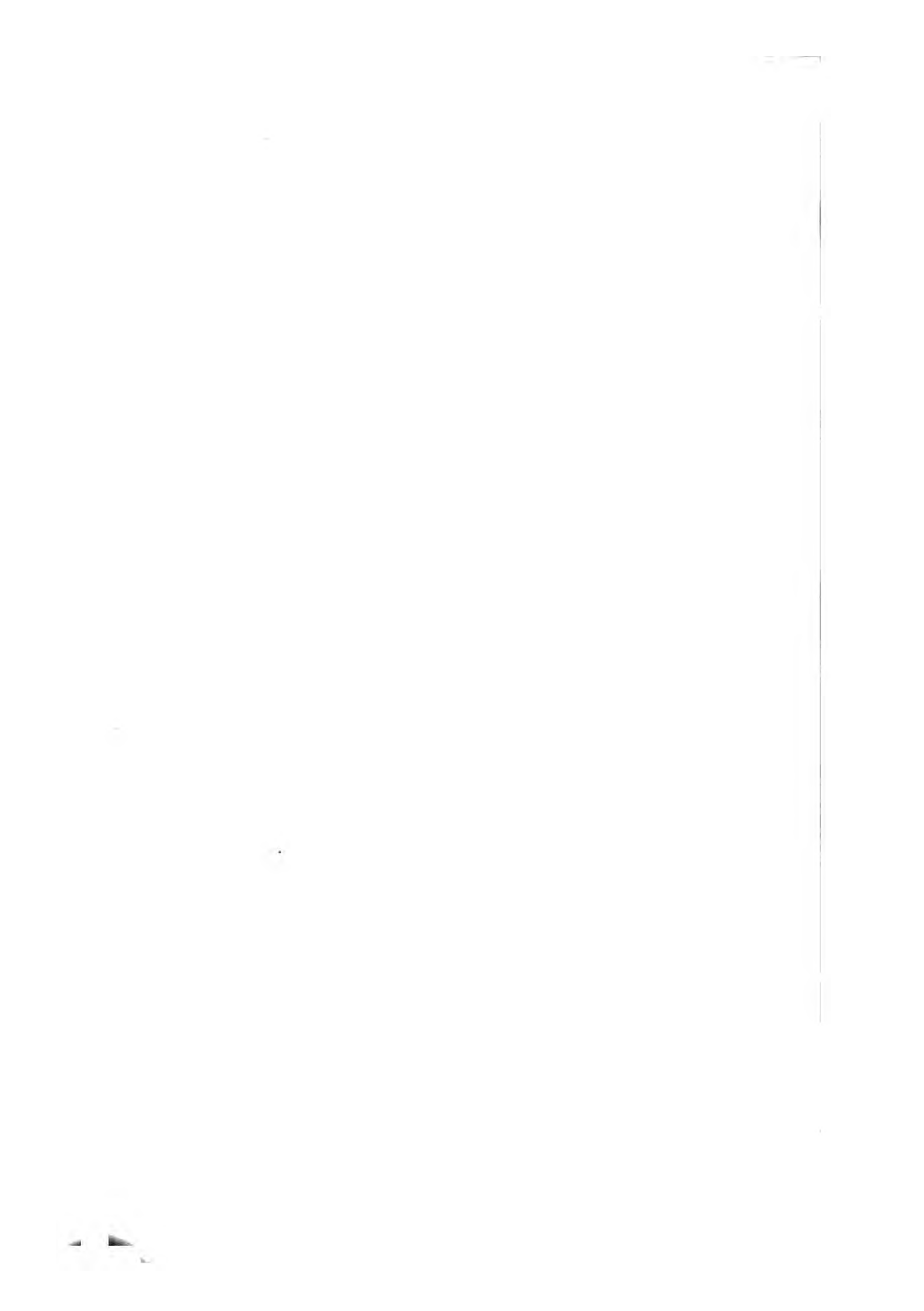
On April 3 Wellington caused the third, fourth, and sixth divisions and three brigades of cavalry, under command of Beresford, to cross the Garonne on pontoon bridges below St. Cyprien, but the attack was delayed until the 10th.

The French right was posted on Mont Rave on the east, the left at St. Cyprien on the west, and the centre at the canal on the north. The conscript reserves manned the ramparts of the town. Wellington himself advanced from the north, intending to attack the north and east fronts, while Hill was to fall on St. Cyprien. Picton, with the third and light divisions, began the attack of the north front, and Beresford, with the fourth and sixth divisions and three batteries, attacked the French by Mont Rave.

Picton drove the French outposts back and behind the works which covered the canal bridges; but the Spanish under Alten were so badly

handled in this action that they were terribly slaughtered. Picton himself suffered from his rashness. Meanwhile Hill stoutly maintained his ground and forced the exterior entrenchments. But success now depended on Beresford's attack, for Wellington had no reserves, as Picton's divisions were thoroughly beaten. Soult began to concentrate on Mont Rave, but so desperate was Beresford's onset that nothing could withstand it, and the brigades of Pack and Douglas gained two redoubts. Then rockets were shot among the French, and as these engines of war were unknown before, they struck dismay in the enemy's ranks. The carnage on both sides was dreadful, and the 42nd was almost annihilated. The brave Harispe still maintained his ground, but having fallen wounded, the French lost their courage, and Beresford became master of Mont Rave. Soult determined to fight next day, but, seeing that he was being shut up in Toulouse, he filed out of the city with great order and consummate ability. Thus ended the Peninsular War.





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