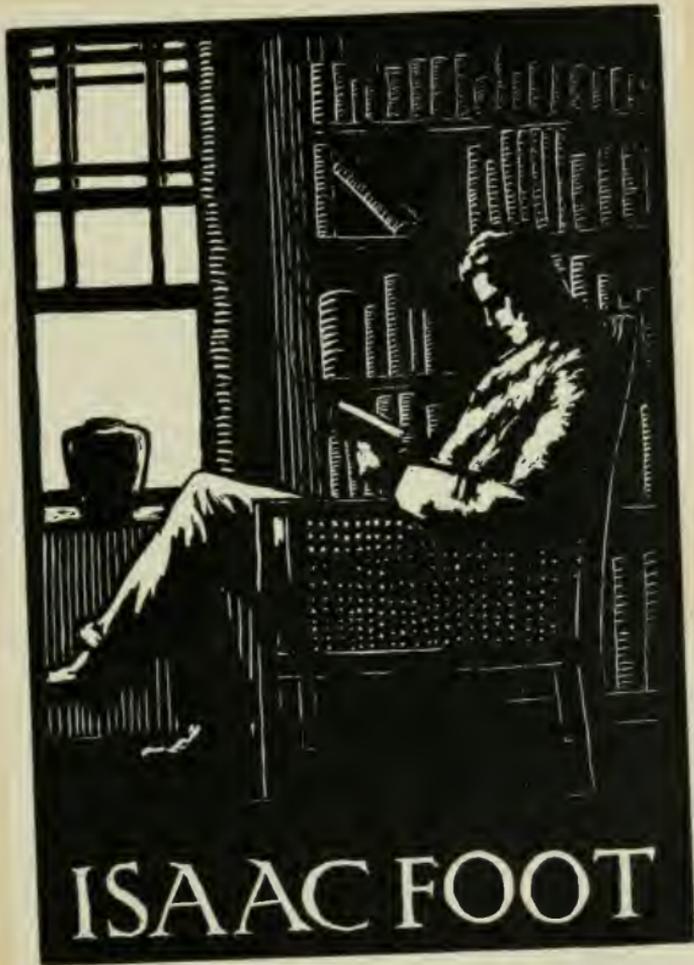




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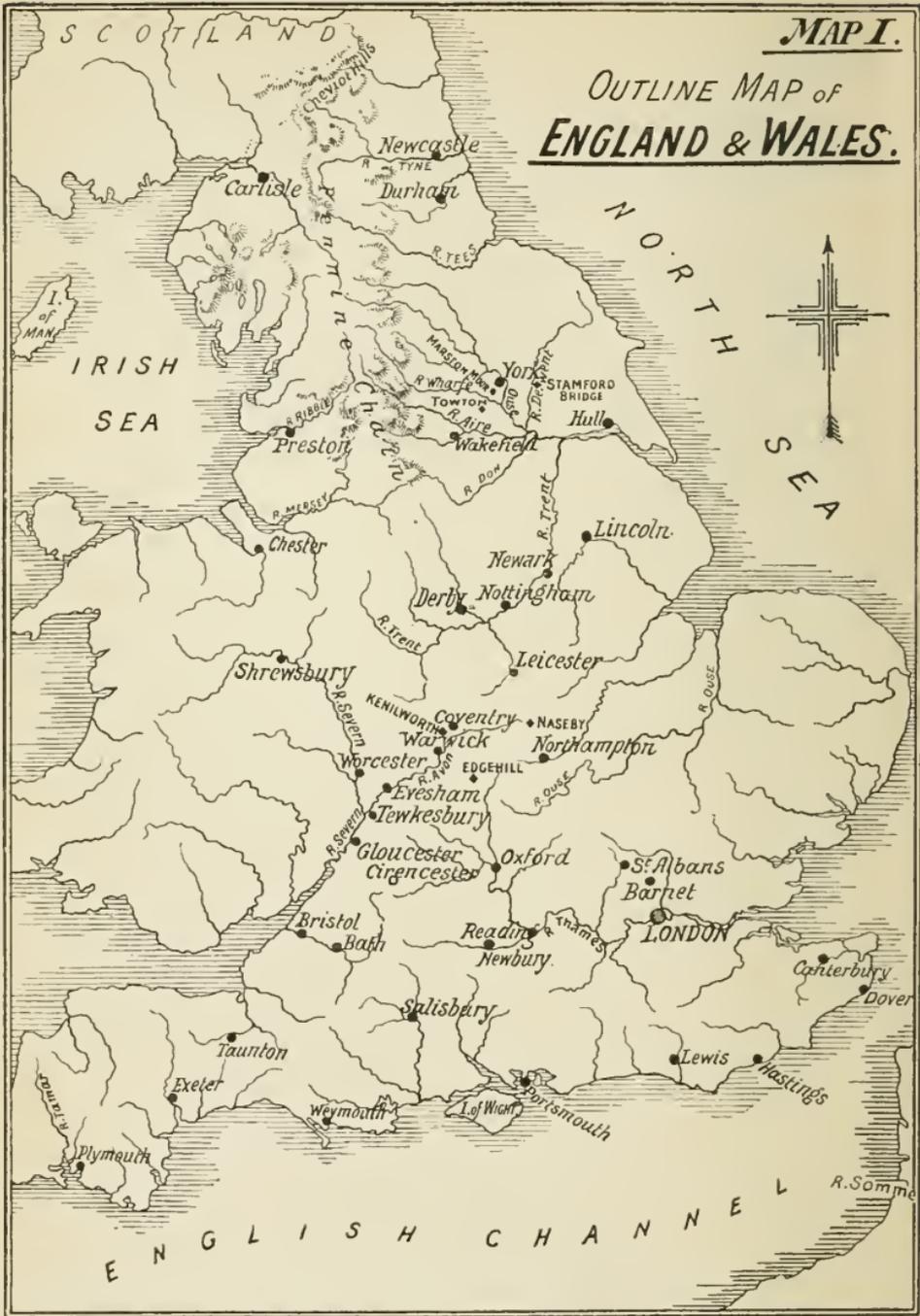




BATTLES OF ENGLISH HISTORY

MAP I.

**OUTLINE MAP of
ENGLAND & WALES.**



BATTLES
OF
ENGLISH HISTORY

note
BY
HEREFORD B. GEORGE, M.A., F.R.G.S.

FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET, W.C.
LONDON

1895

DA50
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RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON & BUNGAY.

PREFACE

IT has been the business of my life to teach history : and the informal division of labour which comes to pass in a University has led me to pay special attention to the military side of it. This aspect of history involves much comparison of statements and weighing of evidence, and is therefore calculated to be very useful to those for whom the study of history is, not their permanent occupation, but the means of completing their mental training. Campaigns and battles present in an exceptionally clear shape the stock problems of history, what was done, why it was done, what were the results, what ought to have been done, what would have been the consequences if this or that important detail had been different.

It is however not easy to gain from books a clear general idea of a campaign or a battle, harder perhaps than to obtain a similar grasp of the work of a legislator, or of the drift of a social change. To the ordinary historian the military side is only one aspect of his theme, and very possibly an aspect which interests him but little. He narrates the facts as given him by his authorities : but when these are vague, as mediæval writers mostly are, or discrepant, as modern writers are who mean to be precise and write from different standpoints, he need be something of an expert to make his narrative lifelike. On the other hand, purely military works are, very reasonably, technical : they are written for experts, to whom the technical language is familiar, and they often go into considerable detail. Ordinary readers are apt, consequently, to want help in obtaining from them a clear idea of the outline of events. Like Pindar's poetic shafts, they are *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν, ἐς δὲ τοπᾶν ἑρμηνέων χαρίζει.*

Having experienced these difficulties myself, both as

student and as teacher, I have thought that I might render some service by trying to act as interpreter, and to describe the chief military events of English history in a way which shall not be technical, but yet shall bring out their meaning. I do not write for experts, though it is they who must judge whether I have described correctly. I write for those who do not know much about battles, and would like to understand events which are interesting in themselves, and are great turning-points in history : they must judge whether I have described intelligibly. If I have met the proverbial fate of those who sit on two stools, it is not for want of pains in trying to keep my balance.

I feel that it is *prima facie* presumptuous for a civilian to write what is in some sense a military book : but after all it is the customer who feels where the shoe pinches. Moreover many of the battles of English history occurred in past ages, in relation to which the professional training of a modern soldier would teach him little beyond the permanent principles of strategy, which every educated man should understand. Given also an elementary knowledge of tactics, which has spread pretty widely in this country since volunteering began and the war-game became popular, a civilian ought to be able to deal adequately with Hastings and Crecy, with Towton and Marston Moor, if not with the campaigns of Marlborough and Wellington. If I have failed, it is not because the subject is outside the province of a civilian, but because the writer has been unequal to his task.

Si vis pacem, para bellum is a sound maxim for statesmen : for ordinary citizens it may be paraphrased thus—the better you understand war, the more you will desire peace. I have found that soldiers' love for peace, and horror of war, is usually in proportion to their experience : they deem no sacrifice too heavy to secure the greatest of national blessings. I think therefore that it is reasonable for one who belongs to a profession pre-eminently peaceful, to attempt to aid his countrymen in realising what war means. The better they understand this, the less they will be tempted to enter on war lightly, the more they will feel how amply worth while is every effort to put their country beyond the risk of attack.

I wish here to acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to my friend Col. Cooper King, formerly Professor of Tactics at Sandhurst, who has not only taken great trouble in drawing the maps to suit my scheme, but has also obtained for me useful information, besides helping me with some valuable suggestions and much friendly criticism. I would not however do him the ill service of sheltering myself behind his authority as an expert. The faults of my work, whatever they are, are mine and not his, though they might well have been more numerous without his assistance.

I have made no reference to the naval battles of English history, hardly less numerous than the great land battles, and, two or three of them at least, even more important. To deal with them adequately would require knowledge to which I cannot pretend. Moreover they might best be treated on a separate plan, similar perhaps to that which I have followed, but entirely distinct from it.

Oxford,

Jan. 1, 1895.

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BATTLES OF ENGLISH HISTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BATTLES are the most generally interesting class of events in history, and not without reason. Until mankind have all been reduced to a single pattern, which would put an end to history, there will be conflicting interests, sentiments, creeds, principles, which will from time to time lead to war. We may settle many disputes peacefully by mutual concession, or by voluntary submission to external arbitration: but an appeal to arms always lies behind, and is the only resource when differences go too deep for reconciliation, or when the self-respect of nations is too severely wounded. Even within a nation there are many possibilities, remote perhaps yet never unimaginable, which may bring about civil war. And though it is perfectly conceivable that a given war may be waged to the end without a single important battle, if the superior skill of one side enables it to gain overwhelming advantage without fighting, yet practically this does not happen. Battles are in fact the decisive events in the contests which are of sufficient moment to grow into war. It is very easy to exaggerate their importance, to fix attention on the climax only, and lose sight of the events which led up to it, and which went very far in most cases towards determining its result. But after all the battle is the climax, and the world in general may be forgiven for over-estimating it.

Writers, whose humane instincts have been outraged by the way in which other people ignore the horrors of war, and dwell only on its glories, have sometimes argued that wars settle nothing, as they only leave behind a legacy of hatred which tends to fresh wars. No doubt in some cases, and in a certain sense, this is true. Napoleon trampled Prussia under foot at Jena, and the spirit engendered in the Prussian government and people by their ignominious defeat brought about in course of time the war of 1870, in which France in her turn was crushed almost as ruthlessly, to cherish ever since a hope of revenge. Still Jena was decisive for the time, and Sedan for a still longer period; and there is nothing to prove that France and Germany may not be the best of friends one day. If peaceful accord at one time does not prevent a future quarrel should circumstances alter, no more does past hostility prevent future alliance. Austria and Prussia were permanent, apparently natural, enemies during a century and a half, except when the common danger from Napoleon forced them into tardy and unwilling union; now their alliance is paraded as the permanent guarantee of the peace of Europe. Russia contributed more than any other power, except perhaps England, to the destruction of that fabric of universal empire with which Napoleon dazzled the French. Forty years later, another Napoleon joined England in making war on Russia and humbling her in the Crimea: now France and Russia advertise their enthusiastic attachment to each other. This is however only to say that men's interests will often be stronger motives of action than their passions; and if the interests of two nations conflict again in the present, as they have done in the past, their animosity will be all the keener for the memories of past defeats sustained at each other's hands.

Is it then undesirable that the memory of past wars should be fostered? Does it produce nothing but a longing for revenge on the part of those who have suffered defeat, a sentiment of vainglory on the part of the victors? Is the roll of English victories over France to breed in us nothing but an arrogant notion that an Englishman is worth three Frenchmen, an inference which the mere numbers engaged at Crecy or Agincourt, if we knew no more, might seem to

justify? There is some danger that this may be the case, if we remember only the battles, the points of decisive collision, and take no heed to the wars as a whole, and to the contemporary conditions generally. An isolated battle is like a jewel out of its setting; it may look very brilliant, but no use can be made of it. The glories of Sluys and Crecy, of Trafalgar and Waterloo, would be a *damnosa hereditas* indeed, if they led us to despise our neighbours and possible enemies.

Battles however which are not isolated, but are fitted into their places in the wars to which they belong, and sufficiently linked together to make them illustrate the political and social changes from age to age which are reflected in the changes of armament, may be a subject of study both interesting and instructive. Detailed narratives of the battles themselves appeal to the imagination in more ways than one. There is the romantic element, not merely the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war," and the feats of brilliant courage which are often admired out of all proportion to their utility, but also the occasional startling surprises. What drama ever contained a more thrilling incident than the battle of Marengo, changed in a moment from a more than possible French defeat into a complete victory, through a sudden cavalry charge causing the panic rout of an Austrian column up to that moment advancing successfully? And there is the personal interest of noting how one man's great qualities, skill, promptitude, forethought, fertility of resource, in all ages, bodily powers also in the days before gunpowder, lift him above his fellows, and enable him visibly to sway their destinies—how the rashness and incompetence of another entail speedy and visible punishment. And behind and above all, is the great fact which of itself suffices to justify the universal interest, that the lives of the combatants are at stake. "All that a man hath will he give for his life;" yet the call of duty, or zeal for his cause, induces the soldier to expose his life to danger, never insignificant, and often most imminent and deadly; and discipline enables him to do this coolly, and therefore with the best prospects, not of escaping the sacrifice, but of making it effectual. The admiration of the soldier which is caricatured in the nursery-maid's love for a red coat is

obviously silly, but the demagogue's denunciation of him as a bloodthirsty hireling is equally foolish, and far more mischievous.

If detailed narratives are to be fitted into their historical place, the first question that suggests itself is why battles were fought where they were. The exact site is usually a matter of deliberate choice on the part of one combatant or the other, the assailant seizing his enemy at a disadvantage as he crosses a river, for instance, or the defendant selecting what seems to him the best position in which to await attack; and what position is most favourable obviously depends on the tactics of the age. Of the latter Hastings and Waterloo furnish conspicuous examples; of the former the clearest instance in English history is Tewkesbury. The locality however, as distinguished from the exact spot, is determined by a variety of considerations. Some are geographical: the formation of the country, which includes not only the direction and character of rivers and chains of hills, but also the position of towns and forests and the course of roads, limits in various ways the movements of armies. Some may be called political: the course of events practically compels the attempting of a particular enterprise. For instance, the battle of Bannockburn had to be fought because Stirling Castle was to be surrendered to the Scots, if an English army did not relieve it by a given day. The majority of the considerations involved are however strategical; and it is worth while to attempt to make clear what is implied by this often misapplied word.

Strategy is the art of moving an army to advantage, so that either when it comes to fight it may do so on favourable terms, or it may gain ground on the enemy without fighting. An invasion so directed as to give the invader the command of the resources of a rich district, or to deprive the enemy of access to an important harbour, is an instance of the latter form of strategic movement. The former and commoner form, so moving as to compel the enemy to fight at some disadvantage, may take either of two shapes, or may involve both. There are two elements to be considered in comparing the situation of the combatants before a decisive battle. Which side has the best chance of winning? This depends mainly on the relative

strength that can be brought into the field. To which side will the consequences of defeat be most serious? This depends mainly on the position of the two armies in the theatre of war. James IV. of Scotland, when the battle of Flodden was fought, had allowed Surrey to get between him and Scotland: here a defeat meant destruction. Henry V. was in a similar strait before Agincourt, but in this case victory in the field extricated him from danger. Obviously one of two combatants may begin with very inferior strength to his opponent; in that case he will probably be obliged to stand on the defensive, and his strategy must be directed to making the most of his force, to doing the best he can with very small numbers for minor purposes, to avoiding battle until he can equalise matters somewhat, and bring as large a proportion as possible to bear on the decisive point. Obviously also one side may have an advantage over the other derived from geography; for instance, one may have, while the other has not, a great fortress near the common frontier, which will serve as a starting point for invasion. A general has to take the facts as he finds them, and make the best of them. He is the most skilful strategist who gains the most without fighting, and who succeeds in shifting the balance most largely in his own favour before engaging in decisive battle.

Changes in tactics again are matters of great interest from age to age, not merely in themselves, but in connection with other developments on which at first sight they seem to have no bearing. Primarily they are matters of intellectual progress: the invention of gunpowder was an event of incalculable importance in human history. Similarly the material progress exemplified in making good roads brought with it the possibility of supplying an army in the field, instead of its being compelled to subsist on the country; and the possibility of doing this presently became a virtual necessity, because the best supplied army had a visible advantage. Thus gradually, through the progress of civilisation, armies have become highly elaborate machines, which require to be continuously supplied with food, ammunition, clothing, all the material without which they cannot act effectually. Hence they need to keep up continuous communication with their base of operations: and the con-

ditions of strategy have been proportionally altered and rendered more complicated.

There are other changes in tactics, that is to say in equipment and mode of fighting, which may be called political: and it is not always easy to see whether they are the causes, or the effects, of social and political changes; possibly they are both. In the early middle ages, the feudal aristocracy was dominant politically, the mailed knights were preponderant on the battle-field. When infantry had learned on the continent of Europe to repel mailed cavalry with the pike, in England to destroy them with the clothyard arrow, the political supremacy of the feudal nobles waned along with their military superiority: their overthrow was consummated when the development of artillery placed feudal castles at the mercy of the crown. Inasmuch as political power must in the last resort depend on physical force, it is plain that the nature of the armed strength of a nation at any time will be an important element in determining the nature of its government.

There are also lessons to be learnt from battles which may roughly be called moral. Frederick the Great remarked cynically that, so far as he had observed, Providence was always on the side of the strongest battalions: and if the phrase be given sufficient width of interpretation it is perfectly true. No man ever exhibited more clearly than Frederick that strength has many elements. Discipline, endurance, mobility, courage, are all important constituents of military strength, as also is the relative excellence of armament. Soldiers who can be trusted not to lose their heads, either from eagerness or from panic, are worth far more in the long run than more excitable men. The bulldog, that never relaxes his grip but in death, is a more formidable opponent, weight for weight, than the tiger. Still more valuable is the iron tenacity which is capable of fighting after all hope is lost: it may apparently succumb, but such defeat is worth many a victory. The Spartans at Thermopylae were cut to pieces, but they taught the Persian king what Greeks could do, and prepared the way for his headlong flight when his fleet was beaten at Salamis: and the English in the Indian Mutiny enforced the same lesson.

The individuals are lost to their country, but their death is worth more than many lives.

English history is in many ways well suited for illustrating the lessons that may be learnt from battles and their setting. It is continuous beyond any other national history of even moderate length. Englishmen of to-day have more in common with the axemen of Harold than Frenchmen of to-day have with the horsemen of Condé. Hence it is easier in England than elsewhere to see the significance of the changes, social and political, which accompany the military changes. The Norman feudal cavalry overcome the Saxon foot-soldiers, and the long-bow presently discomfits the lance; artillery makes mediæval walls worthless: the musket and pike supersede the bow, and the invention of the bayonet combines pike and musket in one. Later still have come enormous extension of the range of fire, both for infantry and artillery, the invention of new explosives and other engines of destruction, the effects of which are still matters of conjecture. Happily more than a generation has passed since British troops fought on a European battle-field: we have not yet tried long range artillery and machine guns, and cordite and melinite, and the other deadly things that end in -ite, except on a very small scale and against inferior races. But all the previous stages are reflected in our history of a thousand years, to go no further back than Alfred, and in some instances with very special significance.

Moreover English history is on the whole a history of success. We have suffered defeat from time to time, but the last crushing rout of a considerable army even mainly English, which history records, occurred nearly six centuries ago at the hands of our kindred the Scots, who have long since become our fellow-citizens. Why this has been the case is obvious enough; and the battle-fields point the moral very distinctly. First of all the English obtained a coherence of organisation and of feeling which entitled them to be called a nation, as that word is understood now-a-days, centuries before any other peoples of modern Europe; and the military value of that advantage is the foremost lesson of the so-called Hundred Years' War with France. Secondly, "the English don't know when they are beaten," as a great enemy said, in scorn for the stupidity of men who

would fight on without perceiving that their opponents had gained tactical advantages, which to the quicker apprehension of some troops would have meant defeat. Such stupidity however is very difficult to distinguish from the dogged resolution which will not give way while life remains: and the quality, by whichever name it is called, is very apt to win. It needs no words to show that the lessons deducible from battles are more obvious to the victors; the losers have a great temptation to see only what may serve to excuse or palliate their defeat.

It may be added that in English history there is a considerable proportion of civil war, where the purely military aspect of things is not obscured by the possible or probable results of diversity of race. The conquest of India is also unique in history, for the mode in which it was achieved as well as for its extent. Thus English history gives every variety—its long continuity spreads its great battles over eight centuries, and those battles have been fought against European equals, in internal conflict, against the alien races of India. The only experience which England has not had is that of one armed nation precipitating itself on another; from this we are happily preserved by the narrow seas.

CHAPTER II

HASTINGS

It is probably needless to say that Hastings was not the first battle of English history. The Romans met with desperate resistance in more than one locality before they could complete their conquest of Britain : indeed it was not completed at all, for the wild tribes of the Scottish highlands never submitted. Details are scantily given : some of the principal scenes of conflict cannot even be identified with any certainty. But any one who desires to know how our British ancestors fought against the Romans may feel sure that the narratives given by Caesar of his battles with the Gauls afford a pretty faithful picture of the battles fought by the Celts on this side of the Channel. He may even be content with newspaper accounts of the fighting in Africa between English troops and Soudanese, or Zulus, or Matabeles. The picture of the fierce enthusiasm, the desperate courage, of untrained savages dashing themselves to pieces against the coolness of disciplined troops armed with superior weapons, is essentially the same, whether the legionaries use the *pilum* or the Maxim gun.

So too, after the Romans had quitted Britain, and the Angles and Saxons came pouring across the narrow seas, the contest between them and the Britons was in some localities most stubborn. The scanty but reasonably trustworthy information which we possess indicates this clearly enough : the kingdom of Wessex in particular extended itself westward very gradually and at the cost of serious battles. The localities of some of these are known, and the geographical and other reasons which led to their taking place on these fields may be fairly well inferred. But of

detail there is none, though we may safely conclude that the "dim weird battle of the west" in Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*, which belongs to this age so far as it has other than ideal existence, was totally unlike, except for the fury of hand-to-hand conflict, any actual encounter between British king and heathen invaders leagued with his own rebel subjects.

Similarly when the Anglo-Saxon conquest was complete, and the new kingdoms began to contend for mastery among themselves, there were many bloody battles, some of them of real importance to the history of our island, as marking the decisive points in the severe struggle between Christian Northumbria and heathen Mercia, but little or nothing more than their names is known. Hume in a well-known passage cites with apparent approval the saying of a greater man than himself, to the effect that the battles of the Heptarchy period were of no more interest than the conflicts of kites and crows. If this be overstated from the point of view of their permanent results, it is impossible to dispute its truth relatively to the military aspect of these wars. Little as is known about them, there is every reason to believe that the art of war formed no exception to the general rudeness and ignorance of the age.¹ Indeed there is positive evidence, in the fact that the first Danish invaders, who appeared before England had come to own a single ruler, found the English far their inferiors in arms, in skill, in everything but mere courage. The English had no coherent organisation, no practice in combined warfare, no defensive armour. Hence they were no match for the pirates, clad in mail shirt and iron cap, trained to rapid movement, and prompt to defend themselves behind rudely constructed fortifications when hard pressed.

Gradually the scene changed. The Danes who had begun as mere marauders, landing here and there to plunder and destroy and then return to their ships, remained in the land as conquering settlers. The English gradually adopted arms and equipment similar to those of their enemies, and learned to encounter them on equal terms. By degrees the Saxon kings of Wessex (their power, like good metal, rendered

¹ There was doubtless learning in Northumbria, but it was altogether monastic, and limited to that one kingdom.

tougher by the hammering it had received from the Danes) became the effective rulers over the main part of the island, over Angles, Saxons and Danes alike, and at least nominally supreme over the Celtic fringe in the north and west. Gradually too the organisation took somewhat of a feudal character. The free ceorl bound by the general law to appear in arms for the defence of the country, becomes the "man" of a lord, bound to serve at his call. The Danish Cnut, who won the English crown by the sword after a long conflict in which there are no military differences traceable between Saxon and Dane, but who was in the end fully accepted by both alike, carried the approximation to feudalism still further. He divided England into great earldoms, resembling only too closely the duchies of Normandy and Burgundy in their tendency to become both hereditary and practically independent. When the Danish dynasty died out, the weakness of the restored Saxon king worked for good in one respect: the power of the crown was virtually wielded by Godwine, the ablest of the earls, and by his greater son after him. On the other hand the very preponderance of Godwine's house sharpened the antagonism of its rivals. When Harold, at length king in name as well as in fact, had to face the two-fold danger of invasion from Norway and from Normandy, he found those parts of England which were not ruled by himself or his brothers lukewarm in the national cause: the old separate traditions, the old race jealousy of Angle, Saxon, Dane, had resumed serious activity. The only solid support he had was the finest body of trained infantry which the world had seen since the decay of the Roman legion.

On January 5, 1066, Edward the Confessor died: his last public act had been the consecration of his new abbey at Westminster. The Witenagemot, assembled as usual at Christmas time, and probably in unusual numbers for the sake of the ceremony so dear to the heart of Edward, whose end was known to be near, felt that no time must be lost in filling the throne. The right of election beyond all possible question lay with the Witan: custom prescribed the choice of a member of the royal house, and gave obvious and natural preference to the last king's son, at any rate if he were a grown man; but not even he could have any right

save by election and coronation. Now however the royal house was extinct, save a feeble boy, grandson of Edward's elder half-brother ; William duke of Normandy was known to be dreaming of the English crown. Under such circumstances there was virtually no alternative but to elect some one not of royal birth : and Harold the earl of Wessex, the virtual ruler of England for some years past, was the only possible choice. Accordingly the crown was offered to him on the very day of Edward's death, and the next day saw the burial of the dead saint and the coronation of the living hero. Harold's position was a difficult one even at home, besides the danger from over seas. The earldom of Mercia, the whole centre of England, was ruled by Edwin, third in succession of a family which had been permanently hostile to the house of Godwine. Northumbria was in the hands of his younger brother Morcar, who had replaced Harold's brother Tostig, against whose tyrannous rule the men of Northumbria had revolted. The young earls were in every way contemptible, feeble in action, narrow-minded, selfish, short-sighted. They saw no reason why Harold should be preferred to themselves, and in their hatred of him lost sight of their own true interests. They dallied with the thought that England might once more be divided into separate kingdoms for their benefit, being ignorant or reckless enough to imagine that they would be able to withstand the Norman if he, through their inactivity, succeeded in conquering Wessex. For the time Harold's personal influence won over the Northumbrians, and the two earls acquiesced in his rule, and were only too glad of his assistance against the Northmen : but when the final stress came not a man whom Edwin and Morcar could control was found by the king's side.

William the Norman had absolutely no claim to the crown of England : his ambition saw an opportunity, and his unscrupulous skill made a string of baseless pretexts look sufficiently plausible to be accepted by those who wished to believe in them. He said that he was the nearest of kin to the late king, which was false ; he was a distant cousin, but only through Edward's Norman mother, and so was in no way descended from the English royal house. As reasonably might the king of France have claimed the crown of

the Stuarts, on the ground that the wife of Charles I. was a French princess. He said that Edward the Confessor had promised him the succession ; and it is most probable that Edward, whose education had been Norman and whose sympathies were not English, had encouraged him, years before, to hope for it. But the king of England had no right to bequeath the crown ; and whatever influence a dying king's recommendation might have, had been exerted in favour of Harold. He said that Harold had done him homage, and sworn¹ solemnly to recognise him as king after Edward's death ; but nothing that Harold might have done could bind England. The crown of England was elective, freely so in form : and the only limitation which custom imposed, or which could be pretended to have legal force, confined the choice to members of a single family to which William did not belong.

Nevertheless William succeeded in making this farrago of insolent irrelevancy deceive those whom he was interested in persuading, by the aid of a policy even more unscrupulous and far-reaching than his own. In the eleventh century clearness of thought was rare ; men were capable of grasping the idea of kindred, without understanding that not every form of kindred could give rights of inheritance. No one in England, except the handful of Norman settlers, would listen for a moment to William's pretensions : but in Europe generally the notions of hereditary right, and of the sacredness of royal blood, had gained a firmer hold, though fortunately for William they were still vague. It seemed as if a duke of Normandy must needs have a better claim to a

¹ The famous story of Harold having sworn unconsciously on all the relics in Normandy, is told by the Norman writers in many different forms, more or less inconsistent with each other, and some of them demonstrably incorrect ; and it is impossible to discover the truth. That William accused Harold of perjury all over Europe, and that no answer was attempted, is evidence that something of the sort had happened. As Professor Freeman points out, the absolute silence of all the English chroniclers implies that they did not know how to meet the accusation. Harold must have taken some such oath, under some form of coercion, and so have given his enemy an advantage ; but obviously it would have been a greater crime to keep such an oath than to break it. Obviously too, on any version of the story that is not self-refuted, William's conduct was far more dishonourable than Harold's.

vacant throne than any mere subject. Most important of all, William obtained the aid of the Church to condemn Harold for perjury. England had always been too independent to please the papacy; and Hildebrand, afterwards the greatest of popes— as Gregory VII., who already swayed the papal policy, saw the value of the opportunity. To denounce Harold as having forfeited the crown by his perjury, to grant the solemn blessing of the Church to William's mission of pure conquest, would, if William succeeded, be a great step towards establishing the papal claim to make and unmake kings at will, to be supreme temporally as well as spiritually. William could thus appeal for aid to the superstition as well as to the cupidity of all the adventurers of western Europe, as the popes did later for the crusades. It was indeed the first, the most successful, and perhaps the most wicked of all crusades.

William lost no time in solemnly demanding the crown of England as his by right, and formally calling on Harold to fulfil his oath; of course he expected the curt refusal which he received. It was no part of his policy to conceal his purpose: rather he hoped to awaken superstitious terrors in the minds of the English, and give them time to grow. His preparations however took many months, and when he was ready, contrary winds delayed the passage of the Channel for many weeks more, to his great advantage. Harold got together a large fleet to guard the Channel, and called out the *fyrð* of the southern counties to defend the coast. But a body of men serving without pay is hard to keep together, and the imperfect resources of the age made it difficult to feed them. In September, when the summer was over, and no Norman expedition had appeared, Harold was obliged to disband his army, and let the fleet go back to London. Almost immediately he received the news that another and to all appearance more formidable enemy was on the point of invading England in the north.

Tostig, Harold's brother, who had been driven out by his Northumbrian subjects, and whom Harold's justice had refused to support against them, thought he saw his opportunity for revenge and restoration. Whether he suggested to Harold Hardrada, king of Norway, that he should attempt to seize the English throne, or whether Hardrada

had already thought of it as a fitting crown to his career of warlike adventure, is not clear. Certainly they united in the last, the greatest and the most disastrous of the Viking expeditions. With a fleet of several hundred ships, manned it is said by half the fighting population of his kingdom, Harold Hardrada crossed to the Orkneys, and drawing contingents from thence and from Scotland, sailed down the Northumbrian coast, plundering and destroying. Entering the Humber, he went up the Ouse as far as Riccall, some ten miles south of York, and leaving his ships there under a guard, marched upon York. Morcar the earl of Northumbria had so far made no attempt at resistance, but he had gathered the *fyrð* of his earldom, and perhaps of his brother's also, for the two earls moved together from York to meet the invaders. On September 20 a battle took place at Fulford, only two miles from York, in which the earls, after a severe struggle, were decisively defeated. The city surrendered, and the Northmen withdrew to Stamford Bridge on the Derwent, eight miles east of York, to await the collecting of hostages in token of the submission of the whole earldom. King Harold, on hearing the news of his namesake's expedition, had hastily gathered what forces he could, and marched with all speed northwards. On the morning of September 25 he reached York, which had only surrendered the day before, and without halting went in search of the enemy.

Harold Hardrada's camp was pitched on the eastern side of the Derwent—the locality is still known as the Battle Flats—but some of his men were on the western bank, keeping no watch, and in no way prepared for battle. The road from York rises slightly most of the way, and then descends a mile or two to the Derwent: hence Harold's approach was not seen until he was near at hand. The Northmen on the western bank resisted as long as they could, but were driven over the river. One man, we are told by his enemies, defended the bridge with his single arm for some time, until he was killed by a thrust from below. Then the English crossed the Derwent, and the real struggle began.

The Northmen were drawn up, according to their usual tactics when standing on the defensive, in a continuous ring, their shields interlocking. In the centre rose their standard,

the black raven, significantly known as the Landwaster, the gigantic form of the last of the Vikings towering beside it. Their weapon of offence was the long two-handed sword, though how they managed to wield it, and yet maintain the continuity of the shield wall, is rather difficult to understand.

According to the famous saga of Snorro Sturleson, the English king made one last effort for peace before beginning the final onset. His face concealed by his helmet, he rode across with a few of his thegns to the enemy, and offered his brother forgiveness and the restoration of his earldom if he would return to his allegiance. "And what," replied Tostig, "shall be given to king Harold of Norway?" "Seven feet of land for a grave, or as much more as he needs, since he is taller than other men." "Then go back, and tell king Harold of England to prepare for battle: it shall never be said in Norway that I brought their king over to England, and then deserted him." The story is too true to the spirit of the age not to be told; but authority for it there is none, any more than for the words of the champions in Homer. The saga was written so long after the event that it had been quite forgotten how the English of that day fought: they are described as consisting entirely of horsemen and archers, after the fashion prevalent two centuries and more later. Nothing on the contrary is more certain than that at Stamford Bridge there were few or none of either arm. The battle was fought and won mainly by king Harold's housecarls, armed with the Danish axe.

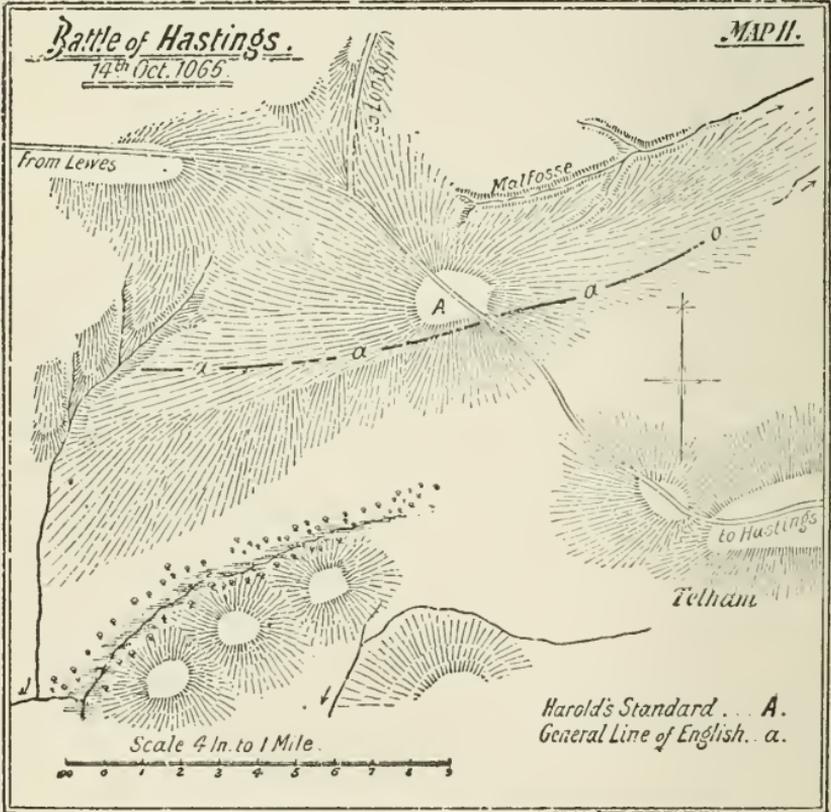
It needs little imagination to picture the encounter of the two hosts, clad and armed substantially in the same fashion, practically of the same race. After a desperate hand-to-hand conflict the English prevailed; Harold Hardrada and Tostig were both killed, and the host of the Northmen was almost annihilated. With politic mercy Harold allowed his namesake's youthful son and the remnant of the invaders to sail home, on their giving pledges for peace, which in truth they were long in no condition to break. The victory of Stamford Bridge was a great stroke for the security of Europe generally: it broke for ever the aggressive power of the Northmen, which for two centuries had been a standing danger to all coasts from the mouth of the Baltic to far into the Mediterranean, and which had completely conquered

two regions as far remote from each other as Sicily and Normandy. At the same time the fearful losses of the battle may well have turned the scale in the struggle that was impending with the transformed Northmen from across the Channel.

William of Normandy's fleet and army was assembled in the first instance at the mouth of the Dive, west of the Seine. Of its numbers it is impossible to speak with confidence, the accounts vary so greatly; but it was as large and complete as the resources of his duchy and the promises he held out to adventurers could make it. He was ready to sail some time in August, but the wind was steadily contrary. About the time when the English fleet was perforce withdrawn from the Channel, he was able to move his whole expedition to the mouth of the Somme, a necessary preliminary to attempting to cross the Channel. So large a fleet, consisting no doubt to a great extent of open boats, could not possibly have ventured to make the passage from the original point of assembly, which was doubtless selected as being more central to Normandy generally. Not for two or three weeks more did the necessary south wind blow. On September 27 the wind was at last favourable: next day William landed at Pevensey, and on the 29th occupied Hastings, where he formed a fortified camp to protect his ships. Nothing could have been more opportune for his interests: he had been unable to move while the English fleet was at sea, nor until Harold, far away in the north, had been weakened by the slaughter among his housecarls at Stamford Bridge. It was not the Norman's policy to plunge into a hostile country. Harold must needs come to meet him, and the nearer he could bring on a battle to his fleet, and therefore to his means of escape in case of defeat, the better for him. Accordingly he remained at Hastings, ravaging the country far and wide, partly for subsistence, partly to compel Harold to approach him.

A Sussex thegn soon brought the news to Harold: he had ridden the whole distance to York in three days, and found the king, so the story is told, at the banquet held in honour of his recent victory. Harold returned to London at once with his housecarls, summoning in all haste the forces of the south and east of England, which responded

heartily to the call, the men of Kent and of London foremost. As soon as an adequate number was assembled, he marched straight to meet the invader. The king's exact movements cannot be traced, but the speed with which the whole was accomplished was extraordinary. In sixteen days at the latest from the time of William's landing,



Harold and his army were close to him. In that time the news had been conveyed to York, the king's army had marched the whole way back, and men had been sent for and gathered from every shire from the Wash to the Exe. While in London, say the chroniclers, Harold was urged to let his brother Gyrth lead the army against the Norman, on the ground that, while he could not deny his promise to

William, and there was a widespread fear of the wrath of the saints at his breaking the oath sworn on their relics, all this applied only to Harold personally. The king might stay in London, organise further levies, and by wasting the country render the advance of the invaders impossible: all would not be lost even if Gyrth were defeated. Harold rejected the well-meant advice; he would ask no one to run a risk he was not prepared to share, he would never harm those who were entrusted to his care. The decision was wise as well as chivalrous, in his peculiar position: his standing aloof would only have strengthened the superstitious awe which the maledictions of the Church on his perjury aroused, and given excuse for other defections than those for which Edwin and Morcar were responsible. Under ordinary circumstances a king's or a commander-in-chief's obvious duty is not to risk his own life. In Harold's case every consideration dictated his being personally foremost in the fight. It would have been well for England had he acted on the advice in a reversed sense, and left Gyrth behind in his stead. While Harold lived Gyrth was only of minor importance; when Harold had fallen, the cause of England might still have been sustained successfully by his brother.

The contemporary, or nearly contemporary, accounts of the battle of Hastings are numerous, both English and Norman, but their statements differ greatly. Hardly any of them write with knowledge of the ground; none, it may be safely said, with anything like military precision. It is easy to discount the exaggerations of partisanship; it is easy to perceive that some statements made cannot be true, for reasons of time and distance, or because they are based on misapprehension of known facts. Beyond this one can only conjecture, as one statement seems more probable than another, or more easily reconcilable with things ascertained beyond reasonable doubt. Moreover, though the locality of the battle is open to no question, the appearance of it has been so much changed, that reconstruction of its condition at the date of the battle must again be imperfect. Much was probably altered in the building of Battle Abbey, much has certainly been altered in forming the grounds of the modern house, which include the ruins of the abbey

church. For instance the slope up to the spot where Harold's standard was planted, a spot fixed for all time by the high altar of Battle Abbey being placed there, is in its upper part scarped to form a terrace. Again, the whole position looks very like one that might have been selected in earlier days for a camp. The ditch which some accounts say covered Harold's front may possibly have been an ancient one; in which case the hollow bearing the name of Malfosse on the other side, where the defeated English turned and smote their pursuers, may have been partly artificial also. But the present state of the ground affords no positive support to this conjecture, though it does not negative it. All that can be done, in attempting to picture the battle for modern readers, without going into wearisome detail, is to tell the story in a form that does not contradict the known conditions, and to refer to the original authorities¹ readers who desire to judge for themselves.

Harold was by the necessity of the case compelled to fight a battle: so far the Norman had prevailed. Tactically however Harold succeeded in forcing the Norman to fight on ground of his choosing, under conditions favourable to the English method of fighting, and unfavourable to the Norman method. He posted his army on a projecting bit of hill, a spur in fact of the South Downs, close to the

¹ Professor Freeman's great History of the Norman Conquest contains a very minute discussion of every point of detail, and a narrative framed by laboriously piecing together the statements which on careful comparison he deems most correct. Much of this is very valuable, though there is at least one important point in which his account cannot be right. Much of it is more or less wasted labour, because it involves giving a precise meaning to expressions in the authorities which were probably used loosely. The main outlines are clear enough, the details are at least partially conjectural, and inferences based on physical facts are a safer guide, so far as they go, than interpretations of the inconsistent and perhaps unmeaning language of monkish writers.

There is also the Bayeux Tapestry, which has been reproduced by Mr. Collingwood Bruce, and which for costume and arms is invaluable: but from the nature of the case it is a very poor guide in determining the tactics of the battle. To rely on it for such purposes, as Professor Freeman and others do, seems to me as unreasonable as to deduce a military history of the battle of Agincourt from Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, as put on the stage.

direct road from Hastings towards London. William of Normandy could not possibly pass the English without fighting: if he did so he was liable to be cut off from his ships. Nor could he wait indefinitely at Hastings: he had no choice but to advance. Further, to receive attack in a defensive position was what gave the best chance of success to the English, practically all foot-soldiers, the best of them clothed in mail shirts and armed with axes. Finally, the piece of ground actually chosen was exactly suitable for its purpose: it was not too large to be fully manned, and it compelled the Normans to charge uphill. On the other hand it is obvious that the Normans, whose main strength lay in mailed horsemen, could not stand on the defensive; attack was what they were fitted for.

Harold's army was drawn up facing to the south, on a ridge somewhat under a mile in length. The ground in front sloped away, gently on the right, steeply in the centre, rather less steeply on the left flank, where the little town of Battle now stands. Behind the right and again behind the left there were hollows, the latter being apparently then the most marked. Behind the centre of the hill was a sort of broad isthmus connecting it with the mass of the Downs. Along the whole or part of the front a palisade¹ of some kind seems to have been constructed, by way of protection against the onset of the Norman horsemen: but this cannot possibly have been an elaborate and solid barrier. In the first place there was not time to make such a thing; as has been already noted, the interval between William's landing and the battle was amazingly short for what was done in it. Harold cannot possibly have had more than one October day in which to fortify his position. Nor is there the least probability that the Norman would have looked on, while

¹ A vehement controversy has raged since Professor Freeman's death regarding the accuracy of his narrative, the point most strenuously disputed being his statement that Harold's front was protected by a solid wooden barrier. It is maintained in opposition that there was nothing but the wall of interlaced shields familiar to both Saxons and Danes. Without entering into the controversy, I content myself with saying that while the weight of testimony seems to be in favour of some kind of obstacle having been erected, I am satisfied, for the reasons given in the text, that there cannot have been anything like the massive structure described by Professor Freeman.

the position he would have to attack was strengthened to the extent suggested. Moreover there were no materials for such a work ready to hand, though there may well have been plenty for a slighter fence. A chronicler of later date does indeed say that houses were pulled down for the purpose; but the contemporaries imply, if they do not positively assert, that there were none near: the spot is identified in one English chronicle only as being "by the hoary apple-tree." Again, the narratives of the actual battle describe close hand-to-hand fighting, which must have been across the barrier, if there was one; and this is obviously inconsistent with its having been a massive structure, still more so with its having been double or triple. Whatever the nature of the fortification, whether palisade or ditch, or both, it was only a slight additional protection: the real defence of the position was the stout arms of the English.

The Norman camp was still at Hastings, seven miles off. We hear of spies being sent out by both sides, and of the Englishmen, unused to see shaven faces, coming back with the report that there were more priests than soldiers among the Normans. We hear of formal demands made by William that Harold should keep his oath, or submit to the arbitration of the Church, an obvious mockery, as the Pope had already sent William a consecrated banner in token of his solemn blessing on the invasion. We even hear of William challenging Harold to decide the dispute by single combat. Such are just the details likely to be invented by a narrator desiring to be picturesque; the only intrinsic improbability about them is that they imply a longer time spent by the two armies in the presence of each other than is consistent with the known facts.

Early on the morning of October 14, the Norman host marched out from Hastings, and passing over the intervening high ground, halted on the hill of Telham, whence they looked down on the English position, a mile and a half away on the other side of the valley. Here the knights assumed their heavy armour, and the duke by accident put on his coat of mail hind part before. His superstitious followers were shocked at the evil omen, but he readily turned it, as most such supposed presages can be turned,

in his own favour, saying, "That means that my duchy will be turned into a kingdom." Hearing from one of his spies that Harold's standard was displayed, so that there was no doubt that the king was there and meant to fight, William went on to vow that in case of victory he would build an abbey where that standard stood. The centre of the army, when drawn up for attack, consisted of the native Normans, the left of the auxiliaries from Brittany and Maine, more or less dependent on Normandy; the right was formed of the French adventurers who had joined in the expedition in hopes of sharing the plunder of England, but was commanded by William Fitzosborn and Roger of Montgomery, two of William's most trusted nobles. The sole idea of battle being an attack straight to the front, the whole line was formed in the same way. The archers went foremost to do what mischief they could to the stationary English. Next came the heavier armed foot-soldiers to break down the defences (whatever they were), and open the way for the mounted knights, who constituted the third line, and on whom the chief stress of decisive fighting would fall. In the centre rode the duke himself, with his brother Odo bishop of Bayeux by his side, each armed, as the tapestry shows them, with the heavy mace.

It was about nine a.m.,¹ according to the chroniclers who note the hour, that the battle began. About the centre of the English line were planted the twin royal standards. The red dragon of Wessex, which had waved over many a battle-field and had but rarely seen defeat, appeared now for the last time. Beside it Harold's own personal device, the Fighting-man, the figure of an armed warrior embroidered in gold, marked on its first and last field the spot where the king and his brothers fought. Harold's housecarls, and the men of London and Kent armed in like fashion, formed the centre of the line. On their left were seemingly men less heavily armed, but quite able to hold their own against their opponents. On this part of the line the fighting throughout the battle seems to have been obstinate, equal,

¹ It must have been later in reality; since sunrise, the whole Norman army had marched seven miles, had halted, and had then been arrayed in order of battle, and this on October 14. Moreover, such a battle could not have lasted nine hours, and it certainly ended at dark.

and uneventful; the great oscillations of fortune, the murderous repulses, the ultimate success of the Normans, are at the centre and on the right. From the present appearance of the ground there can be no doubt that the access to the English right was by a much gentler slope than elsewhere. Nevertheless the ill-armed portion of the English host, peasants with no defensive armour, carrying javelins or clubs, a few possibly with bows, were there placed. A modern general would certainly have guarded with special care the flank that was most easily assailable. Harold doubtless took for granted, and quite correctly, that wherever he planted his standard, thither the principal attack would be directed.

While the archers covered the general advance with a flight of arrows, a minstrel named Taillefer rode forward singing "of Charlemagne and Roland, and those who died at Roncesvalles." Throwing his sword into the air and catching it again, he made straight for the English, and killed two, one with his lance and one with his sword, before he himself fell. Behind him the Norman foot-soldiers charged up the hill, met by darts and stones, and as they reached the line by the deadlier hand weapons. Finding that they made no impression, William led in person the charge of the mailed knights, to be equally repulsed. Horse and man went down under the blows of the terrible axe. The Bretons and others on the Norman left fled in confusion, pursued by some of the English right, who contrary to orders broke their ranks to follow up the flying enemy. Panic and disorder spread more or less to the centre: there was a cry that the duke was slain: the battle was almost lost. Baring his head, William in person stemmed the tide and drove the fugitives back: they rallied and cut down such of the English as had ventured far in pursuit.

The duke, as soon as order was restored, led a fresh attack on the English standard. This time his horse was killed under him, but he himself escaped unhurt, to deal with his own hand, if one is to follow Professor Freeman's account, a very serious blow to the English cause, by slaying Gyrrh, Harold's brother and most trusted counsellor. Harold's other brother Leofwine fell, according to the

picture in the Tapestry, about the same time with Gyrrh. Still the English line remained unbroken; though the defences must have been by this time more or less broken down, the men behind were as firm as ever. Had not William possessed a ready insight, prompter than anything we find elsewhere in mediæval warfare, the Norman chivalry would have exhausted itself finally in vain charges, and Hastings had been as Crecy. The Norman duke however had noted that the only thing which hitherto had disturbed the impregnable line of the English was the rush from the right in pursuit of the flying Bretons. He ventured on the bold experiment of bidding his left make a fresh assault, take again to flight, and if the English rushed forward, turn suddenly on the pursuers. The stratagem succeeded; again the English, out of reach of their king's direct authority, broke their line entirely. When the feigned flight was converted into a fresh charge they were taken utterly at a disadvantage, and though they filled the hollow round the right of the position with French dead, they none the less were routed. The Norman horsemen could now easily reach the level of the hill top, and charge along it towards the standard, instead of toiling up the slope in front. Even yet the battle was in doubt; the Normans could bring the weight of horses and men to bear more effectually, and the English had lost the protection such as it was of their palisade, but the horsemen could charge only on a narrow front, the width of the ridge, instead of up its whole face. Once more William's ready skill suggested a combination against which mere courage and strength must ultimately fail. His archers had obviously been useless while the direct charges up the slope were going on, and of little avail in the intervals, when the English could protect themselves with their shields. He could now use both archers and horsemen together, for the ground to the south was free¹ for the archers, when the knights had reached the hill top on their left. Bidding his archers shoot into the air, so that their arrows fell like rain

¹ This suggestion is not based on any direct statement, but it seems to be the only way in which the archers could have aimed effectually. If they had been behind the horsemen, shooting over their heads, the arrows would have been as likely to strike Normans as Saxons.

about the standard, he led the horsemen on once more. The device was fatal. The English could not ward off the arrows, while engaged in hand-to-hand conflict: they must perish or give way, unless darkness came to their rescue. Just before sunset the final blow was struck: an arrow pierced Harold's eye, and as he lay in agony at the foot of the standard he was despatched by four knights. If we could believe the exulting French poet they mangled his body brutally; but this is happily inconsistent with the certain fact that his corpse was found and buried. The standards were trampled down, the position was at every part seized by the Normans; still the desperate English fought on, and hardly a man of Harold's personal following, or of the nobility of southern England, survived the day, except those already too badly wounded to move. Under cover of the darkness the light armed English fled, again inflicting serious loss on their pursuers, who rolled headlong into the hollow that afterwards bore the significant name of Malfosse.

Had Harold, or even Gyrrh, survived the battle, the conquest of England, it is said, need not have ensued. The remark is a futile one; under the peculiar conditions there was no third alternative. Harold, we may safely say, never dreamed of the possibility of surviving defeat: and his brothers, once in the field, would share his fate, whether victory or death. The Norman duke, we are told, to taste the full flavour of his triumph, had his tent pitched where the English standard had stood, and passed the night there, surrounded by the piled-up dead. Next day William superintended the burial of his own dead; the corpses of the English he left to the dogs and birds, except such as their kindred carried away. Two monks from Harold's own abbey of Waltham came offering large sums, in their own name and in the name of his aged mother, for leave to inter the fallen king within the walls he had built. But the conqueror was inexorable: he bade one of his knights bury the body of the accursed of the Church beneath a cairn of stones on the Sussex shore.¹ Little as William meant it, he was

¹ Harold's tomb was shown at Waltham down to the date of the dissolution of the abbey. There is no positive information on the point, but there seems no reason for rejecting the explanation that William

giving the noblest of sepulchres to the fallen hero, the one English king who has died fighting for his fatherland.

Our sympathies are naturally with Harold and the English, defending their homes and their independence against unprovoked foreign aggression. William's claim was based on falsehood, supported by fraud, established by violence. Nevertheless when once king he ruled well and wisely. If he rewarded his followers with English lands, he prevented the intrusive nobles from obtaining the position and privileges which would render them a mere curse to England. In the fifth generation their descendants had become the leaders of a fairly united nation, winning for all ranks and classes the Great Charter of liberty. Without the Norman Conquest, without the new blood mingled with the English race, without the new ideas introduced into church and state through closer intercourse with the continent, the subsequent history must have been totally different, and so far as conjecture is admissible, far less eminent than it in fact has been, alike in arts and arms, in commerce and in government.

From the point of view of the art of war, the battle of Hastings is also important, marking an epoch there too very decidedly. For more than two centuries after Hastings infantry are of no account in western Europe. The battle had indeed been won by the skilful combination of archery with the charge of mailed horsemen. It is at least doubtful whether the latter would finally have prevailed without the rain of arrows to smite and perplex those whom they were attacking in front. The horsemen however did in fact trample under foot the last relics of Harold's heavy armed foot-soldiers, and feudal pride did the rest. It was taken for granted on all hands that mailed knights, and they alone, constituted strength in war, and this fell in with the political ideas of the age only too well. Seven generations were destined to elapse before the tables began to be turned on the knights.

afterwards allowed the corpse of Harold to be removed to Waltham. It is at least much more probable than that a falsehood should have been allowed to pass unchallenged.

CHAPTER III

THE BARONS' WAR

THE Norman Conquest was, to the English body politic, like one of those powerful drugs which seriously disorder the constitution for the time, but if the patient has strength to bear the treatment do him permanent good. The Barons' War was, as it were, the last feverish fit resulting from the Conquest. The Normans, though they had adopted French ideas and speech, were in race closely akin to the Anglo-Danes; and the fusion between them was hastened by the accession of the house of Anjou to the throne. The Conqueror and his sons had to a certain extent identified themselves with England, leaning for support against the turbulent Norman barons upon their English subjects. Henry II., though he did great things for England as a wise legislator and strong administrator, was distinctly a foreigner. His father was French, his wife was French, his ambition was to dominate France. Henry III., without his grandfather's strong qualities for both good and evil, was still more completely un-English. His confidence was given only to foreigners, to the Poitevin kindred of his mother, to the Provençal and Savoyard kindred of his wife, never to Englishmen. He fleeced the nation and the church beyond endurance to enrich foreign favourites, to satisfy the Pope, to further schemes of vague ambition alien, if not hostile, to English interests. Naturally strong opposition was roused, which pervaded the nation generally, and was headed by the greatest of the nobles and the most conspicuous prelates who were not foreign intruders. Their chief, Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, though French by birth, had inherited a great station from his English

mother, and was as thorough an English patriot as was in that age possible. The barons at length forced upon the king changes in his government, which amounted to a temporary superseding of the royal authority. The king of course strove to free himself from restraint : and desultory hostilities followed, which led to an agreement to refer the matters in dispute to the arbitration of the king of France. The high reputation of Saint Louis seems to have blinded the barons to the fact that he was on principle a steady upholder of royal power. His award was completely in Henry's favour, and the appeal was most injurious to the barons' cause. They must either abandon all that they had been contending for, or repudiate the judgment they had themselves accepted beforehand. The former evil was the worse of the two : they chose war.

The decisive struggle took place at Lewes in Sussex, which the king had made his headquarters, as being the seat of earl Warrenne, his brother-in-law and most powerful supporter. Montfort marched to Fletching, some nine miles from Lewes, whence he despatched the bishops of London and Worcester to attempt to come to terms with the king. The royalist party were far too confident to listen to any compromise ; probably they were ignorant of Montfort's strength, for they did not even send out scouts to watch his movements. On receiving the contemptuous defiance of the king the barons resolved to march before daylight next morning (May 14, 1264). Religious feeling ran high in their camp : earl Simon exhorted all his followers to confess their sins before the battle, and the bishop of Worcester solemnly absolved and blessed the kneeling host, after which all put a white cross on breast and back, as a token that they were going to war for the right. The army advanced unopposed and unobserved, till they came up on the great ridge of the South Downs, whence they could see Lewes, about two miles off. Here a halt was made, to form order of battle, before beginning the descent. The Londoners, a numerous body and zealous in the cause, but little trained to war, were on the left. Montfort's sons commanded the right, the earl of Gloucester the centre. Montfort himself was at the head of a fourth division, which was either in reserve, or on the right centre. Modern

writers seem agreed that it was in reserve, though the contemporary authorities do not say so expressly : apparently they assume it, because the regular mediæval practice was to divide into three "battles."¹ If Montfort really did so organise his line of battle, he was in advance of his contemporaries, and most thoroughly deserved his victory. The earl is credited with a rather puerile device by way of deceiving the enemy. He had injured his leg some time before, and had been obliged to travel in some kind of carriage,² or horse litter. This had accompanied him so far : he now left it behind on the ridge of the downs, with the baggage of the army, under a guard ; and it is suggested that he did this in order to make the royalists think he had stayed there in person, unable to ride.

The barons' army was approaching Lewes from the north-west. The tidal river Ouse half encircles the town ; coming from the north it bends round the east side, where the bridge was and is, and then flows southwards to the sea, but at that date the ground to the south of the town was more or less flooded every tide. On the north edge of the town is the castle, on the south the large priory of St. Pancras, which was the king's headquarters. From the height where Montfort left his baggage a well-marked ridge runs southwards, falling almost to the level of the plain

¹ This word, which is of course French but was adopted in English with the same signification, definitely means a body of men, originally mailed horsemen, drawn up together ; but it implies nothing as to their formation or strength. The usual practice was to form three ; the vanguard, which became ordinarily the right when in line of battle ; the rearguard, which similarly became the left ; and the main battle or centre. In the Latin chroniclers the equivalent term is generally *acies*, which occasionally leads to some confusion in interpreting their statements, as the classical sense of *acies* is order of battle, as contrasted with *agmen*, order of march.

² It is suggested that this was a waggon, such as was habitually used in Italy at an earlier date, and occasionally at least in England (as at the battle of the Standard), to carry to battle the standard of the town. The earl's standard certainly floated over it, and attracted prince Edward's attention : and from the account given of the prisoners being shut up in it, it would seem to have been very substantially built. Montfort however would hardly have travelled in such a waggon, and certainly the royalists imagined he was in it. There is no reason except the silence of the chroniclers why there should not have been both a *carroccio*, and also Montfort's own carriage.

two miles due west of Lewes. South of this the ground again rises in a sort of hog's back on which stand two wind-mills, bearing the name of Kingstone mills: the present Brighton road runs through the gap. East of the ridge is a hollow, large enough to hold the present race-course, and beyond this is a gentler slope, straight down to Lewes, which is hollowed out in its lower part, so as to divide it into two, the easternmost portion leading straight to the castle.

On the alarm being given the royalist army assembled in all haste, in the usual three divisions, of which prince Edward, the king's eldest son, commanded the right; the king in person was in the centre; the left was under his brother Richard, earl of Cornwall, the titular king of the Romans.¹ The prince, issuing from the castle, found himself opposed to the Londoners who formed Montfort's left wing, and who seem to have been somewhat in advance. With youthful zeal he charged them at once, and put them to flight. Some writers say that he selected the Londoners for attack, because of his eagerness to avenge the insults offered to his mother in passing through London a little while before: and it is perfectly possible that this animosity led him to pursue them, as in fact he did, several miles, thereby losing the battle: but it is obvious that he had no time to select his opponents, even if the arrangement which committed the right wing to his leadership had allowed it. Gloucester with the centre came down the other part of the slope leading straight to the town, and thus encountered the king: of this there can be no reasonable doubt, or that the king after an obstinate conflict was driven into the priory. But it seems to be generally assumed that Henry and Guy de Montfort led their wing down the ridge which runs southwards, and that Richard of Cornwall met them at the bottom. The slope is extremely steep for a mediæval force of mounted horsemen in order of battle; moreover to do this would have left a very dangerous gap between the right and centre. It seems more probable that Montfort's right descended straight on Lewes in close proximity to the centre. However this may be, the right wing encountered

¹ As he had not been crowned at Rome he had no right to use the imperial title.

the earl of Cornwall's troops, and could make no impression on them, until Montfort supported his sons with his own division. Then the king of the Romans was routed, and himself took refuge in a wind-mill, doubtless on the spot now known as Kingstone,¹ where he eventually surrendered. By this time the king's own division had also been broken, and though part escaped into the priory, most part of them were cut off from both it and the castle, and were slaughtered in the streets of the town. The only hope of retrieving even partially the fortunes of the day lay in the prince, who after pursuing the Londoners to his heart's content, had caught sight on his return of Montfort's carriage, and assuming that the earl was lying helpless in it, made a dash to seize him and the baggage. The carriage however contained three citizens of London who had entered into some plot against Montfort, and had been carried off as prisoners and left there for safety; but in the confusion of the sudden onslaught the poor citizens were killed by their own friends. By the time prince Edward had got back to Lewes it was growing dark; many of his companions, including earl Warrenne himself, seeing that all was lost, fled over the bridge, which soon became a scene of frightful confusion, hundreds being drowned in the river, or forced into the tidal mud and there suffocated.

The foregoing account of the battle of Lewes is partly conjectural: the chroniclers are as usual wanting in precision of language, and not altogether in accord; and there is always room for doubt as to the identification of localities vaguely described. It agrees with the conformation of the ground, and with the ascertained facts: particularly it explains the king being driven into the priory, and the earl of Cornwall into a wind-mill. With the royal right wing gone, after the prince had dashed on the Londoners, Gloucester would have had no real difficulty in pressing the king's right, so as to cut him off from the castle, which would be an obvious advantage. Again Montfort's own troops, whether in the right centre or in the second line, would naturally have come down on Richard of Cornwall's right, and separated him from the king, and unless the story or

¹ The name itself may very possibly be derived from the event.

Richard's barricading himself in a wind-mill is altogether an invention, which there is not the slightest reason to imagine, it could only have been the Kingstone mill. Wind-mills, beyond most things, remain for centuries on the same spot.

The Barons' War is the only occasion in English history, except the great civil war of the seventeenth century, in which a national party in arms against the crown won a great victory in the field, and became dominant in consequence, at least temporarily. It is an interesting coincidence that the blunder which lost Lewes, the eagerness of a youthful prince to pursue his routed opponents, regardless of the general fate of the battle, should have been repeated, not once only, by his descendant four centuries later. The hastiness of Rupert prevented Edgehill from being a victory, and definitely lost Naseby, the final battle of the war. Otherwise Lewes has no great military interest. It exhibits the disastrous results to a defeated army of having a river in its rear, and (possibly) the value of a reserve. But the two armies were alike in equipment, in straightforward hard fighting all along the line, in the preponderance of mailed horsemen. Of missile weapons we hear nothing, except that *balistarii* assisted in defeating Richard of Cornwall: the word is often used to denote cross-bowmen, and probably has that meaning here. The strange thing is that there should be no trace of the archers, who only thirty years later played an important part at Falkirk.

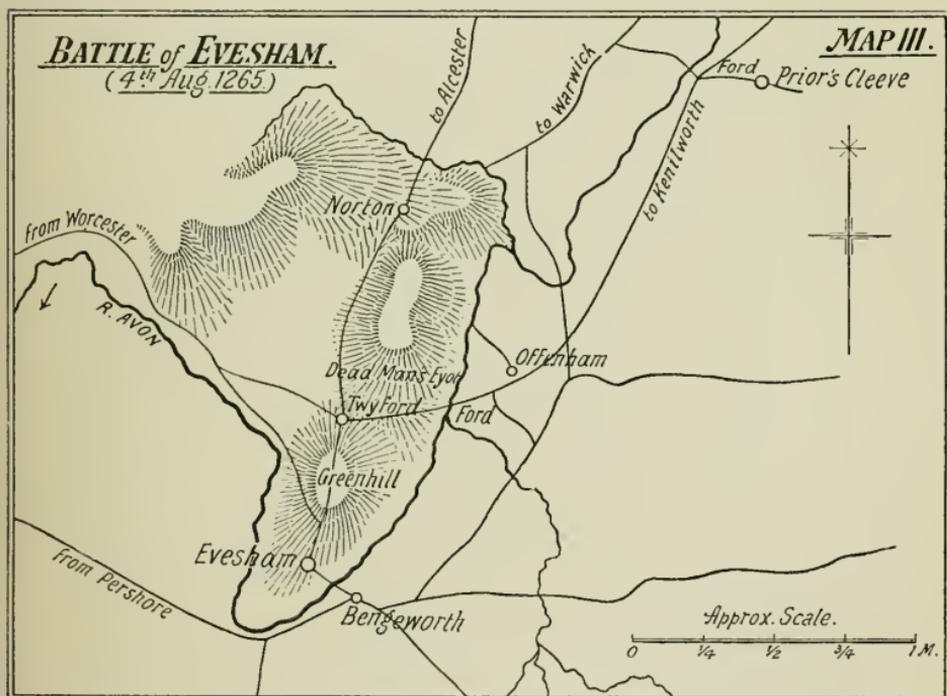
The battle of Lewes made Montfort master of England, and gave him the opportunity of summoning the famous assembly, to which for the first time the towns sent representatives. His rule was not very successful: hampered as he was by the natural hostility of the king and his adherents, and by the selfish jealousy of some of his own party, he would have been more than human if he had overcome all his difficulties, and laid himself open to no imputations of personal love of power. The fact that he had the king in his hands, virtually a prisoner, made his position especially difficult. So long as the king was in his power, he could not expect the royalists to acquiesce in his new policy: to let him go was to give up his one safeguard. The earl of Gloucester, the most powerful of his supporters, broke away

from him, chiefly out of personal jealousy. Earl Warrenne and others of the fugitives from Lewes landed in South Wales with a strong force in the spring of 1265. Montfort was at Hereford, trying to quiet the disordered marches of Wales, the king and prince Edward with him. From Hereford the prince made his escape on May 28, and became naturally the head of the royalist party. Bristol, Gloucester, Worcester fell into the hands of prince Edward ; the earl was unable to cross the Severn, and was obliged to wait until his second son Simon could bring an army to his assistance. Simon had been besieging Pevensey, and was a long time in reaching Kenilworth, his father's principal stronghold. The castle was too small to contain his troops, and Simon with incredible carelessness allowed them to remain outside without keeping any guard, apparently for two or three days at least, since Edward at Worcester had time to hear of it, it is said through a female spy. On the night of July 31, Edward marched rapidly from Worcester, and completely surprised young Simon's forces, capturing several important prisoners and all the baggage. Simon himself escaped into the castle, but he and his army were utterly lost to his father's cause.

On the same day the earl of Leicester left Hereford, and crossing the Severn in boats camped some miles to the south of Worcester. He probably had heard that his son had reached Kenilworth, and may either have purposed to attack prince Edward, while, as he might expect, his son was approaching the prince from another quarter, or simply to effect a junction with his son. Edward had taken great pains, apparently with success, to let no fugitives escape from Kenilworth : for the earl never heard of his son's overthrow. The exact times are somewhat differently given by the various authorities, but it is quite certain that Montfort was in Evesham early on August 4, and that Edward knew of his movements and had time to anticipate him. One story is that the king, who was still with him, insisted on stopping at Evesham on the evening of the 3rd, that he might sup in the abbey and hear mass there next morning, a request with which the earl could not decently refuse to comply without a strong motive, which, ignorant as he was of the disaster at Kenilworth, he could not have. The

king's love of ease, and of devotion, would account for this well enough : that he did it in concert with his son, in order to delay Montfort, is not credible, for in that case Edward might have saved some miles of a hard march. The prince, on ascertaining that the earl had moved from his camp at Kempsey south of Worcester, in the direction of Kenilworth, formed a plan for cutting him off.

Evesham stands on the north bank of the Avon, at the bottom of a loop some two miles deep and one wide. In



the thirteenth century the banks were marshy, and there was no bridge for a long distance, except one at Evesham leading to the hamlet of Bengeworth on the east of the loop. Over the high ground known as Green Hill, rising above the town and filling the north part of the loop, ran the direct road from Worcester, crossing the Avon by a ford¹

¹ There are the remains of an ancient bridge at this spot, where so many

at Offenham, two miles above Evesham. By this road prince Edward set part of his forces, including probably all his foot-soldiers, to march in the night of August 3, in pursuit of Leicester, entrusting the command to his new supporter the earl of Gloucester. He himself started with a large body of horsemen on the north road, so that his purpose might not be detected, then cutting across country to the eastward reached the ford on the Avon at Prior's Cleeve, some miles above Evesham, early on the 4th. As the road from Evesham to Kenilworth passes near Prior's Cleeve on the left bank, he hoped thus to intercept the earl in front, while Gloucester pressed on his rear. Finding that there was no sign of Montfort's approach, he descended the left bank as far as Offenham: thence he despatched Roger Mortimer with a detachment to hold the bridge at Bengeworth and prevent the earl escaping that way, and himself recrossed the Avon and occupied Green Hill.¹

When troops were first seen from Evesham on the slopes above, it was supposed that they were young Montfort's army come to join his father: for among the banners that waved over the prince's ranks were those captured at Kenilworth. "It is my son," said the old earl, "nevertheless go up and look, lest we be deceived." The earl's barber, Nicholas, ascended the bell-tower of the abbey, and soon detected the banners of the prince and his supporters, and presently saw Gloucester's forces come up the western side of the hill from the road along the Avon. The earl went up to see for himself, but he knew that he was ruined: the only road of escape for his army must by this time have been almost barred by Mortimer, and his men were not even formed for march. Individuals might yet escape by swimming the Avon, or dashing across the bridge before Mortimer arrived, but for the main body the only way lay

of the fugitives from the battle were cut to pieces that the meadow bears the name of Dead Man's Eyot: but there is no mention of a bridge in the authorities, so that probably the bridge was built later.

¹ Here again I have given the account which seems to me most probable, after study of the ground and of the authorities. Professor Prothero, in his *Life of Simon de Montfort* (p. 339 note), gives the different possibilities, and comes to a conclusion differing from mine on one point only.

through the hostile army, outnumbering his by three or four to one. "God have mercy on our souls," he exclaimed, "for our bodies are the enemy's." The rest of the story cannot be told better than in Professor Prothero's words.

"His friends urged him to fly, but the thought of flight for himself was not in his mind. A natural flash of anger burst forth in the remark that it was the folly of his own son which had brought him to this pass. Nevertheless he endeavoured to persuade his eldest son Henry, his old comrade Hugh Despenser, and others to fly while there was yet time, and maintain the good cause when fortune should smile again. But one and all refused to desert him, preferring not to live if their leader died. 'Come then,' he said, 'and let us die like men; for we have fasted here and we shall breakfast in heaven.' His troops were hastily shriven by the aged bishop of Worcester, who had performed the same office a year before upon a happier field. Then he led them out against the enemy, with the white cross again upon their shoulders, in as close order as he could. In the midst of them was the king, for Simon seems to the last to have cherished a faint hope of cutting his way through his adversaries; and as at Lewes, the possession of the royal person was everything to him. As they neared the hill, prince Edward's troops, who had been in no hurry to leave their point of vantage, began to descend upon them. Simon's heart was struck with admiration of the fair array before him, so different from that which he had met a year before; his soldierly pride told him to whom their skill was due. 'By the arm of St. James,' he cried, 'they come on well; they learnt that not of themselves but of me.'

"On the south-western slope of Green Hill there is a small valley or combe; in this hollow the chief struggle raged. On the further side, in the grounds of a private house, stands the obelisk, which marks the spot where, according to tradition, Simon de Montfort fell. Towards the higher part of the combe is a spring, still called Montfort's Well, which, on the day of the battle, is said to have run with blood. Prince Edward began the fray, and while the earl was engaged with him, Gloucester came up with a second body on his left, so that he was soon surrounded. The Welsh infantry, poor, half-armed troops, fled

at once, and were cut down in the neighbouring gardens by Mortimer's forces, which must now have been advancing from the rear. Simon's horse was killed under him; his eldest son was among the first to fall. When this was told him, he cried, 'Is it so? then indeed is it time for me to die;' and rushing upon the enemy with redoubled fury, and wielding his sword with both his hands, the old warrior laid about him with so terrific force, that had there been but half-a-dozen more like himself, says one who saw the fight, he would have turned the tide of battle. As it was he nearly gained the crest of the hill. But it was not to be. For a while he stood 'like a tower,' but at length a foot-soldier, lifting up his coat of mail, pierced him in the back, and, with the words *Dieu merci* on his lips, he fell. Then the battle became a butchery. No quarter was asked or given. The struggle lasted for about two hours in the early summer morning, and then all was over.

"Of the horrid cruelties practised by the victors on the body of their greatest foe it is better not to speak. The gallant old man lay, with the few who remained faithful to him and to his cause, dead upon the field, and with him the curtain seemed to fall upon all that was free and noble in the land. The tempests which raged throughout the country that day were remarked as shadowing forth the grief of heaven. The accompanying darkness, which was so thick that in some places the monks could no longer see to chant their prayers, was nothing to that which must have fallen on many when they heard of the death of their protector. But he had not lived in vain. England had learnt a lesson from him, and had seen glimpses of what might be; and a retributive justice brought his principles to life again through the very hands which had destroyed him."

It is a coincidence that Montfort, whose victory at Lewes was made so complete by the royalists having the Ouse behind them to cut off their flight, should have himself been destroyed by being caught in the same trap. He did not however wilfully commit the blunder of fighting with a river at his back: his ruin was due to the overthrow which his son had incurred by his own folly at Kenilworth, and to the skill with which the prince utilised his very superior information. Edward seems indeed to have developed in these few

months from a headstrong boy into a general of exceptional power for his age. At Lewes he threw away a fair chance by his impetuosity, while Montfort, employing his inferior numbers to the best advantage, was securing the victory behind him. At Evesham he so used his opportunities that the earl, who had given him that severe lesson, had no scope for generalship : he could only fight and die as a brave man should.

CHAPTER IV

FALKIRK AND BANNOCKBURN

IN 1290 Margaret of Norway, the infant queen of Scotland, died, and a difficult question arose as to the succession to her. Edward I. of England had made it the chief object of his policy to strengthen and consolidate his power within the island. To this end he made Parliament a permanent institution, truly representative of the nation as then constituted, though it was not very willingly that he concurred in limitations of his prerogative at the hands of Parliament, which he had systematised, if not created. To this end was directed much of the legislation which is his highest title to fame. To this end he had conquered Wales, and taken the first steps towards incorporating it with England. Now he had an opportunity of uniting Scotland to his own kingdom (he had made plans already for effecting this through a marriage between his heir and the little Maid of Norway), at any rate of making his influence paramount in Scotland.

National prejudices have very naturally coloured the views of historical writers, especially on the Scottish side, who have discussed the right and wrong of the conflict that ultimately ensued. There is no need to enter deeply into the controversy, but it is safe to say that neither party was entirely in the wrong. The English kings had for centuries had some kind of superiority over Scotland, but it dated back to times when feudal theories had not been formulated; and it is clear that Edward I. claimed too much when he asserted his right to be feudal suzerain over Scotland in the widest sense. On the other hand the Scots could not honestly maintain that he had no rights at all over it, as being an independent kingdom. The question of the suc-

cession was a thorny one in every way. There was not, and could not be, any written law on the subject: all the claimants were remotely related to the royal house: all of them whose claims could be seriously pressed, even in an age when ideas on such matters were vague, were nobles of Norman descent, having lands in England as well as in Scotland. Edward on being called in to award the crown required all concerned to acknowledge him as feudal overlord. The competitors, already personally his subjects, naturally made no objection, and if any was made by others, their voice was drowned. Edward awarded the crown to John Balliol, the person who had the best claim according to the legal principles now fully recognised. Difficulties soon arose: the new king's subjects appealed against him to the king of England, which they had a right to do if the king of Scotland was in the full sense vassal, but not otherwise. Edward entertained the appeals, asserting to the very utmost his feudal authority, till the patience of John Balliol was overtaxed. Taking advantage of a quarrel between England and France,¹ John Balliol repudiated his allegiance to Edward; the latter, caring infinitely more for Scotland than for his dominions over sea, let things take their chance in Guienne, and returned to make war on Scotland. His success was easy and complete: Balliol was declared to have forfeited his kingdom, which the lord paramount took into his own hands. At first there was no opposition; there existed in the country a considerable amount of patriotic feeling, but there were no leaders, until one suddenly appeared in William Wallace. Personal injuries received from English soldiers led to his taking up arms, but he was welcomed as a leader by such elements in the Scottish people as cared for their independence, and he justified their confidence. The English forces in Scotland were but small, and Wallace had time to organise resistance on a large scale before he was called on to face an invading army.

A glance at the map² will show how completely Stirling

¹ Philip IV. was playing the same game, over-asserting his claims as feudal suzerain over Guienne.

² A map showing all this part of Scotland will be found at p. 147.

is the military centre of Scotland. The firths of Forth and Clyde indent the country very deeply on the east and west, almost dividing it into two parts. Hence Stirling, the lowest point where the Forth is bridged, and commanding the entrances into Fife, into the basin of the Tay, and into the western Highlands, is of primary importance. Here Wallace defeated in 1297 the army first sent against him; at Falkirk not far off he was defeated in the next year; at Bannockburn, within sight of Stirling Castle, was fought the great battle of 1314, which virtually achieved Scottish independence.

Wallace was a born soldier, as he proved alike by his easy victory of Cambuskenneth, and by his dispositions for meeting king Edward's superior force at Falkirk. The Forth flows through the plain, from above Stirling till it opens into the estuary, in many loops and windings; there was then but one narrow bridge across it, leading from close to Stirling to the abbey of Cambuskenneth, which stands in one of the loops on the eastern bank. When Wallace learned that his enemies were approaching, he posted his men on a bold steep hill known as the Abbey Craig, which is in fact the extreme south-western spur of the Ochil hills. The English leaders, ignorant of their business and despising their opponents, began crossing the river to attack him. Wallace waited till a considerable portion of the English had crossed, and were crowded together in a loop of the Forth, and then led his men down to attack. It was rather a butchery than a battle: the English on the east of the Forth, outnumbered, unable to take order, devoid of any way of retreat, could make no effectual resistance. The numbers given in the chronicles are probably excessive: it is most unlikely that the earl of Surrey should have had 50,000, or Wallace 40,000 men: but under the conditions it is obvious that Wallace could choose his time, so as to have a decisive superiority to that portion of the enemy which alone could encounter him. The slaughter of the defeated side in a hand-to-hand battle was always great, and Cambuskenneth was no exception. The earl of Surrey had never crossed the fatal bridge; but among other Englishmen of note who fell, was Cressingham, the king's treasurer for Scotland, who was much hated for his exactions. "And

so," says the chronicler, "he who had terrified many with the sword of his tongue was himself slain with the sword : and the Scots flayed him, and divided his skin into little bits, *non quidem ad reliquias, sed ad contumelias.*"

In consequence of this victory, Wallace was recognised as guardian of the kingdom in the name of the fugitive John Balliol, and governed Scotland with some success for the time. Edward I. fully understood the wisdom of doing things thoroughly, and when he next year invaded Scotland, came with an overwhelming army. It took him some time to capture Berwick, and during the siege Wallace contrived to leave Lothian bare of inhabitants and of food. His hope was to baffle the invaders by preventing their finding sustenance or guidance. Two Scottish nobles are said to have sent word to Edward where his enemy was, but it is hardly likely that this would have been so serious a difficulty as the lack of food, which rendered abortive, at one time or another, several invasions of Scotland on a large scale. Obviously Wallace must fight at or near Stirling, if not sooner, or else retire into the wild country of the north, which meant giving up all the valuable parts of Scotland to the English king. His numbers were far below those of his enemy : his only chance lay in skilful arrangements for defence. He selected a piece of sloping ground near Falkirk, where a small stream, running at that part through very soft and boggy ground, covered his front. The mass of his soldiers were spearmen, and these he drew up in four circular masses, the front rank sitting, with their spear-butts resting on the ground. The intermediate spaces were occupied by the archers, who were neither efficient nor very numerous ; and the mounted men-at-arms, very few in comparison with the English array, were drawn up in rear. One chronicler adds that Wallace addressed to his men the somewhat grim jest, "I have brought you to the ring ; hop gif ye can." He had done all that a skilful commander could do : but the result was a foregone conclusion unless king Edward was guilty of some gross blunder.

When the English army came in sight of Wallace's position, the king desired that they should rest and eat before attacking ; but his knights, perhaps remembering Cambuskenneth, represented that it was not safe to do so,

with the Scots so near at hand. The first "battle," apparently consisting entirely of men-at-arms, commanded by the earl Marshal, accordingly advanced to the attack, found the stream impassable, and had to make a wide circuit to the left. The second division, under the warlike bishop of Durham, saw the obstacle and turned it on the right. Seeing how far the earl Marshal had to go, the bishop tried to check the impetuosity of his men, till the king with the third "battle" should be at hand to support them; but Ralph Basset rudely told him that he had better attend to his own business of saying mass, and not interfere in military matters. The bishop was a better judge than the knight; the men-at-arms rode down the Scottish archers, and easily defeated the small body of horse, but they could make little impression on the spearmen. The latter could not charge without breaking their order, but they could and did stand on the defensive till the English archers came up. Then it was soon all over with them: the arrows made gaps in their ranks, through which the horsemen charged, breaking up their formation, and slaughtering them in thousands. Wallace drew off the relics of his army towards the Highlands, and from that time practically disappears from history. Partisanship has always dealt eagerly with his name: the contemporary English chroniclers call him *latro*, the Scots exalt him into an ideal patriot hero. The truth would seem to be that, while by no means superior to his age in humanity, he gave evidence of real ability and integrity in his very difficult post as guardian of Scotland; moreover, he exhibited exceptional military skill.

Wallace's "schiltrons," to use the Scottish name for his great clumps of spearmen, were in truth an important advance in the art of war; and though they were not in fact a novelty, they were no doubt a real invention on his part, for it is scarcely conceivable that he should ever have heard of the Macedonian phalanx. The natural formation for men armed with spears is close together, in line, the ranks being drawn up one behind the other, two, four or more deep. Such a line can hold its own against attacks in front, and can advance: but if it is once broken it can be destroyed, and it is almost helpless if its flank is turned. This was substantially the sole order of battle during the palmy days

of Greece. Philip of Macedon improved upon it by forming the phalanx, a solid square of pikemen, who faced outwards in case of need, and could not therefore be taken in flank. The phalanx moved slowly, and hardly at all over rough ground; and it obviously had no power of vigorous attack. Hence in its turn it was beaten by the Roman legionaries, who threw their heavy *pila* from a short distance, and then charged sword in hand. With the fall of the Roman Empire the military art, like all others, had suffered eclipse in western Europe; and though the Anglo-Danes with their axes and shields had reproduced in some sense the Roman tactics, yet from the day of Hastings, when they went down before the feudal horsemen of the Normans, the mailed chivalry had been everywhere dominant. The political preponderance of the feudal nobility was partly cause, partly effect, of their military supremacy. They alone could procure, for themselves and their following, the armour which rendered them almost invulnerable to the ill-armed foot-soldier: the contempt they felt for the villein and the trader seemed justified by the facility with which they could slaughter the lower classes in the field. Slowly the pike reappeared on the scene, in the hands of peoples who were not over-ridden entirely by feudalism, and who had to defend themselves against men-at-arms. It is Wallace's most undoubted title to fame, if not his highest glory, that he was the first to organise plebeian spearmen afresh, not indeed for victory,¹ but with success as against mailed horsemen only. It was the combination of archers with the men-at-arms which won Falkirk for king Edward, just as the same combination had won Hastings for William the Norman. The great difference lay in the fact that in times wholly feudal the credit of the victory of Hastings went entirely to the knights, whereas Edward I. was wiser: from the day of Falkirk onwards the archers became more and more the mainstay of an English army.

England has been destined in three wars to experience the truth that a country whose people refuse to submit to invaders cannot practically be conquered, however superior

¹ The first victory of the pike was gained by the Flemings at Courtrai, five years later.

may be the invaders in military skill or resources: in a fourth war she helped the Spaniards to exemplify the same maxim. Between England and Scotland at the beginning of the fourteenth century no comparison was possible; the southern people were wealthier, more numerous, better organised. Yet the war begun by Wallace's brief career ended in the establishment of Scottish independence. So also the French had no chance in the field against the English of Edward III. and Henry V.; yet the English attempt at conquering France ended in total failure. The little English armies won nearly every engagement against the revolted American colonists; yet the task of subjugating the colonies would have been hopeless, even if other enemies had not assailed England, and hastened the catastrophe.

Edward I. won a great victory at Falkirk, but he never was able to subdue Scotland. Just before his death the Scots found a new leader in Robert Bruce, representing the house rival to the Balliols at the time of the disputed succession and now accepted instead of them, who was duly crowned king. Edward's death stopped a great invasion of Scotland, and his incompetent son neglected Scottish affairs, till gradually the whole country was lost except Stirling Castle. This was, as has been pointed out, the most important post in Scotland: but it could not be held indefinitely, and the governor ultimately agreed to surrender unless relieved before Midsummer day 1314. Edward II. was driven for once into activity, and approached just in time, with an army to which the chroniclers ascribe the incredible number of 100,000 men. Robert Bruce had no choice but to await attack at Stirling: if he marched to meet his enemy, it was obvious that the English might evade him and reach Stirling unopposed. They might even, with their great superiority of numbers,¹ engage him on more than equal terms, and have plenty to spare to be pushed forward to Stirling. Fortunately for him, he had an admirable position ready to his hand within a very short distance.

¹ All accounts agree in representing the English numbers as more than double the Scottish, with an enormous superiority in men-at-arms, the most important item.

About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Stirling a small stream, the Bannockburn, flows from west to east, and then curving northwards flows into the Forth. Between it and Stirling lay the king's park, in which the Scottish army camped. The position chosen for receiving battle was immediately behind this stream. Bruce, who was comparatively weak in horsemen, had to depend, like Wallace, mainly on his spearmen for receiving the charge of the English men-at-arms. Barbour's long-winded poem on the life and acts of Robert Bruce, from which is derived the traditional account of the battle, contains sundry picturesque incidents, the truth of which need not be doubted, though he indulges in a vast amount of patriotic exaggeration. He does not, however, give the details in a form which renders the battle really intelligible. For instance, he describes minutely the "pots," round holes a foot broad and as deep as a man's knee, covered over with sticks and grass all green, which were intended to break the charge of the English horse. But he does not say where, relatively to the army, these pots were: nor does he mention them as having answered their purpose. An English chronicler, Baker of Swinbrook, describes a ditch, three feet deep and wide, as having been dug along the whole front, and covered over with hurdles and grass, into which the first line of the English fell; and the confusion thus occasioned involved the defeat of the English. Neither refers to the burn as having been any obstacle; Barbour indeed mentions houses having been pulled down by the English, with the timbers of which they made bridges over certain pools, but he does not say where the pools were. It is possible that as the battle was fought at mid-summer, and Barbour lays great stress on the intense heat, the marshy ground on the north of it was unusually dry and firm; otherwise it is not obvious why Bruce should have wanted either pots or ditch.

The English host, marching from the direction of Linlithgow, came in sight of the Scottish position in the afternoon of June 23. When they were about two miles off, a body of 800 men-at-arms under Clifford was sent forward to try and pass by the left of the Scottish army, between it and the lower course of the burn, so as to reach Stirling Castle. Had this attempt succeeded the castle might have been said

to be relieved in time to save the promised surrender : and it was within an ace of succeeding. Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, Bruce's nephew, commanded on the Scottish left ; and it was only on Bruce's express order, telling him that a rose had fallen from his chaplet, that he hastened with a body of spearmen to place himself, just in time, across their path. The spearmen formed a clump, like a hedgehog with all his spikes out, and the English horsemen were unable to break their array. James of Douglas, seeing that Moray was very hard pressed, asked the king's permission to go to his assistance. Bruce for the moment allowed his chivalrous instincts to overcome his judgment as a general, and wished to leave Moray to take his chance, but on Douglas urging him consented. On the approach of reinforcements, the English saw that the opportunity was lost, and retired. Douglas, in the true spirit of the age, abstained from pursuit, lest he should rob Moray of any of the glory of having repulsed them.

Edward II., on coming fully in front of the Scots, ordered a halt, but the order was not made known in time to prevent some of the vanguard from coming into collision with them. According to the fashion of the time, Sir Henry Bohun rode out in advance, and seeing Bruce in front of his line charged at him. The king was mounted on a pony, but did not avoid the combat, as in any age when a commander was not a knight first and a general afterwards he certainly would and ought to have done, and killed the Englishman. The story goes that the Scottish lords, having better sense than their king, blamed him for having risked his life, which might have meant the ruin of every one, and that Bruce's sole answer was that he was sorry he had broken his battle-axe. The English vanguard, on seeing the issue of this duel, retired again without coming into serious collision with the Scots, and doubtless feeling the omen to be a bad one.

Next morning early the battle commenced in earnest, and the authorities are hopelessly at variance as to what happened. Barbour describes the attack of the English men-at-arms on the Scots in their position, with severe fighting which ended in their defeat. Incidentally he mentions Sir Robert Keith having charged into the flank of the English archers with five hundred men armed with steel that on

light horse were horsed well, and having totally discomfited them so that they did not shoot any more. But he does not say where the archers were posted, and as he declares there were 52,000 of them, it is simply impossible to accept his story. More than one English chronicler says that the English front line was formed of archers and spearmen, with the mounted men-at-arms behind: but they do not explain what became of the front line. It has been suggested as an explanation that the archers were so far in advance of the men-at-arms that the Scottish horse were able to charge and disperse them before they were supported: but this is scarcely possible, as the whole English array was too near. Baker of Swinbrook says that the archers were in the second line, and as he carefully adds that it was a great mistake not placing them on the flanks of the men-at-arms, as was done afterwards, his informant may be presumed to have noted the point. According to his account, which is the most intelligible and coherent, the English men-at-arms charged straight on the Scottish front, were thrown into utter confusion by the front rank falling into Bruce's concealed ditch and the hinder lines pressing on, and were slaughtered helplessly by the Scots, who reserved only the rich for ransom. The archers seeing the disaster, tried to shoot over their heads; but many of them, in the excitement of battle shooting straight to their front, "struck a few Scots in the breast and many English in the back." The crush and hopeless confusion will be all the more intelligible when it is remembered that the space occupied by the Scots was far too narrow to give room for the charging masses, who consequently impeded and overthrew each other. The fight was still going on, when over the little hill above the Scottish right, which has ever since been known as the Gillies' hill, appeared the "yeomen and swaynes" of the Scottish army, who had rigged up an apology for banners, so that they seemed to the English to be a large reinforcement to the Scots, coming to take them in flank. A panic seized that portion of the army which was not engaged, and they fled in confusion, the king himself following their example.

Whatever uncertainty may hang over the details, there is no doubt about the completeness of the victory. The

number of the slain may well have been large, seeing how the knights and men-at-arms were crowded together in a confused mass, incapable of resistance. The gross incompetence of Edward II. or his advisers, who with all the material for victory in their hands, and the precedent of Falkirk to guide them, threw their advantage away, was responsible for the defeat. Their hasty flight was also probably the cause of the dispersion in panic rout of the whole English host, a disgrace which has never since fallen on an English army. According to Barbour, the king with his immediate attendants sought shelter in Stirling Castle, and was refused admittance by Mowbray the governor, who pointed out that the castle could not hold out long, now that the English army was defeated, and that therefore the king's only chance of safety lay in making off. How Edward could possibly have made his way round to Stirling Castle, with the victorious Scots between him and it, can with difficulty be imagined. The advice, however, if ever given, was sound as far as it went. Better judgment still would have bidden him rally his host, for even after the defeat he must still have greatly outnumbered the Scots. But if he had been capable of taking this obvious and soldierlike step, he would not have committed the folly which lost the battle.

The victory of Bannockburn virtually gained the cause of Scottish independence, though fourteen years had yet to elapse before England acknowledged it by treaty. That the Scots fully deserved to win their independence, and that they had a right to win it if they could, no one in modern times will deny. No impartial reader of history can doubt that in some sense they had been dependent on England before the war, or that the exaggerated claims of Edward I. gave reasonable ground for repudiating them entirely. Whether the success of the Scots was for their permanent benefit is another question. The union of the whole island into one kingdom was, it may be fairly said, inevitable sooner or later. Scotland must needs have gained enormously in all material respects by incorporation with her more advanced neighbour. Had this taken place before centuries of political antagonism and repeated wars had developed national hatred, and quickened into a passion Scottish national feeling, the union would have been easier and

more thorough. With Scotland added, instead of permanently hostile, the weight of England in the European scale, already great, would have been much increased, with consequences impossible to calculate. At the same time the world would have been the poorer for the loss of the distinctive character, which was developed in the Scots mainly through their separate Reformation.

INTERMEDIATE NOTE

THE LONG-BOW

The long-bow is like many other inventions which have played a great part in history : its origin is obscure. The bow in some form is almost as old as the human race ; but it on the whole was regarded as the weapon of inferior soldiers, down to near the time when the invention of gunpowder was destined to render it altogether antiquated. We have seen that the Norman archers at Hastings, skilfully used, contributed greatly to the victory : but the evidence of the Bayeux Tapestry may be taken as conclusive that these bows were only the short bows of the ancient world. Richard I., the only really warlike king between the Conqueror and Edward I., took pains to introduce the cross-bow, then a comparatively new weapon.¹ It is incredible that the ablest soldier, as Richard undoubtedly was, even of an ignorant age, should have preferred the cross-bow to a weapon which could beat it at every point. Hence we must conclude that the feats of archery attributed to Robin Hood, Richard's contemporary, were reflected back upon his memory from a later time, when such feats were no longer impossible. In the Barons' War the archers play no important part ; but in the course of the reign of Edward I., the long-bow came into general use. Edward used his archers with such effect at Falkirk, that it may fairly be inferred that he had long before

¹ The use of the crossbow was solemnly condemned by the Lateran Council of 1139: no reasons were given, but presumably it was thought that the cross-bow neutralised the natural, and therefore divinely intended, advantage of superior strength.

seen the value of the long-bow and taken steps to foster the use of it, though even then they were employed as an afterthought, to help the horsemen, who alone could not break the Scottish spears. There is nothing like clear evidence as to the locality which developed the long-bow, which not only exceeded the older bows in size and power, but was used in a different manner, though there are slight indications suggesting that South Wales had that honour. At any rate in the fourteenth century it was the familiar and trusted weapon of the English, the instrument of their great and repeated victories.

Archery, as an amusement, has lost much of its popularity of late years, being superseded by other sports which demand less space and afford more active exercise. Probably however every Englishman, if a bow were put into his hands, would instinctively draw it more or less in the right fashion, whether he has ever seen an arrow shot off or not. That is to say he would hold it upright, and draw the string back on his right side, standing himself sideways. Before the introduction of the English long-bow, all archers held their bows more or less horizontal, and drew the string to their bodies. The advantages of the English method are probably obvious : at any rate the briefest experiment will render them so. First, a much longer bow can be drawn to the side than to the breast, which enables a longer and therefore more powerful arrow to be used. Secondly, a much stronger bow can be pulled in that way, which means greater penetrating force. Thirdly, if the long-bow is drawn correctly, the arrow is brought up close to the right ear, which enables the archer to look along the arrow, and aim it with considerable accuracy, whereas obviously no arrow drawn to the breast could be really aimed. Practice makes perfect, in archery more than in many other things : the English archers of the fourteenth century practised assiduously, and attained corresponding proficiency. The regular practising distance was a furlong,¹ which implies that arrows discharged at a high elevation would travel much further. In fact we find "a bow shot" used as a rough measure of distance, equivalent to about 400 yards. If they struck armour obliquely, of course they would be likely to glance and not penetrate ; but it required the very best steel to stop an arrow which struck full and true. Add the fact that a trained archer could shoot with astonishing rapidity, so that the arrows in their flight dazzled and bewildered the enemies at whom they were aimed, and still more their horses : and we have the picture of a missile weapon unequalled till the introduction of the rifle.

Why the long-bow should have remained, as in fact it did,

¹ There is a statute of Henry VIII. which forbids practising at any less distance.

the exclusive property of the English, is a mystery. It is true that archers could not stand alone : they required the assistance of troops differently armed, to protect them against determined attack by mailed horsemen in adequate numbers. It is true also that the long-bow needed considerable muscular strength for using it ; and the average Englishman had probably the advantage in this respect over the average Frenchman, then as now. But Lowland Scots are to all intents and purposes of the same race, yet they went on generation after generation losing their fights large and small against the English, chiefly through the archers, yet never learning to shoot. The explanation may perhaps be that among all who came to feel the power of the cloth-yard shaft, feudal pride was too stubborn to be taught quickly, so that gunpowder was coming into use before they had digested the lesson. Whatever the cause, the fact is certain that the English kept their monopoly of the long-bow, and consequently were, for a century at least, supreme on the field of battle.

CHAPTER V

CRECY AND POITIERS

A FEW months after the accession of Edward III., his uncle the king of France died. Edward had a claim in right of his mother, which, if the crown of France had been a bit of land, to be inherited according to the subtleties of English real property law, would have been plausible, if not sound. The conclusive answer to his claim however lay in the fact that France had a right to settle the matter in her own way. If there was a law of succession, which from the jurist's point of view is more than doubtful,¹ it was against Edward: if there was not, the peers of France, who must be taken to constitute France for this purpose, chose Philip of Valois. Edward's pretensions were not seriously urged, and he acknowledged the new king as his suzerain for the duchy of Guienne; but disputed questions were left open both as to the amount of territory belonging to Edward, and as to the nature of his homage for it to the king of France. Peace was not broken for ten years, but Philip VI. showed himself steadily hostile, assisting Edward's enemies in Scotland, interfering with English commerce, encroaching in Guienne. Philip was entirely unscrupulous, and naturally desirous of carrying on the work of his predecessors, by obtaining effective possession of another of the great feudal domains over which the king of France had titular suzerainty. The south-west had never acknowledged more than the most nominal inferiority: it is no paradox to say that

¹ The so-called Salic law had never been heard of till Philip V. evolved it for his own purposes a few years before: but the principle of exclusive male succession is a natural one for a feudally organised nation to adopt.

the Plantagenets defended the ancient independence of Aquitaine against French aggression.¹ Nevertheless the people of Aquitaine had closer affinities of race and language with France than with England: the ultimate and natural result of the war was to make them French subjects.

Finding war inevitable, Edward III. thought to rouse the enthusiasm of his subjects by reviving his claim to the French crown. Without the cordial support of England Edward was weaker than his rival; with it he was, as the event showed, very decidedly stronger. England was, and had been for two centuries, a nation in the true sense of the word: it needed the long agony of the Hundred Years' War to give France real national coherence. Henry II. had given England a strong central administration, with a system of law fairly equal and well enforced. Ever since the barons had extorted Magna Charta from John, not for themselves only but for the whole people, the powers of the Parliament, and its significance as the representative body of the nation, had been growing. No laws could be made, no new taxation could be imposed, without the advice and consent of Parliament. This was only the beginning of political liberty, in the modern sense, but it was a beginning. In France on the other hand the king ruled over a number of vassals who had little or no relation to each other, and each of whom was much more effectually master of his dependents than the king. The political contrast showed itself in the military organisation of the two kingdoms. Though Edward III. was deeply imbued with the spirit of chivalry, he was far too sensible to carry into the field the noble's absolute contempt for the villein. Moreover there existed in England a class of yeomen who were in fact completely above villeinage, from which on the whole the archers were drawn. The feudal rule, by which the king summoned his vassals to serve him in war, and they came with their following (or did not come if they were disinclined, and the king lacked force to coerce them), had long been obsolete in England. The Parliament granted the king money for war, to supplement his own resources; and

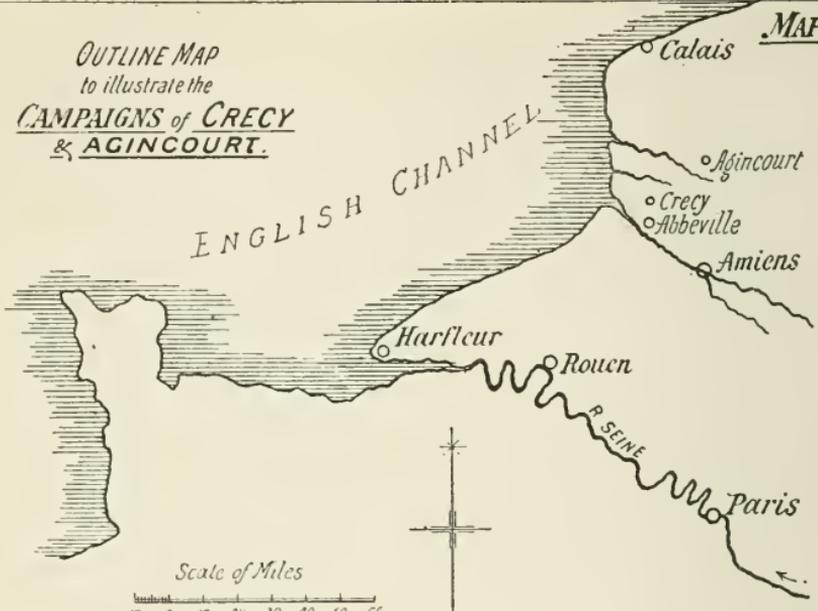
¹ Louis VII. of France had it is true married the heiress of Aquitaine and ruled the province for a few years, but only in her name: and she soon repudiated him, to marry Henry II. of England.

the king agreed with individual noblemen to bring so many men into the field, who were adequately paid and came voluntarily; hence they tended to make war their business, and to acquire something like discipline.

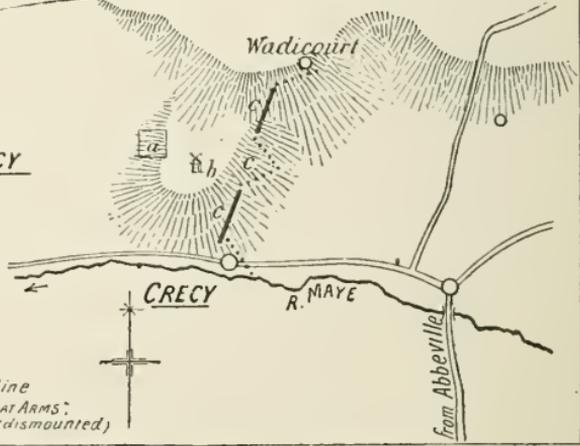
Edward had not far to look for allies. The commercial relations between England and Flanders were close, and highly important to both. The Flemish cities, then at the height of their prosperity, had recently quarrelled with their count, who appealed to his suzerain the king of France; and they promised Edward much more assistance than in fact they afforded. However Flanders gave him a base of operations as against France, and the first years of the war were occupied in more or less futile efforts at invasion, though they brought an overwhelming victory over the French fleet at Sluys on the Flemish coast. Later, a disputed succession to the duchy of Brittany, in which the candidate rejected by the king of France naturally asked help from England, opened a new field for hostility. In 1345 there was serious fighting in Guienne, in the course of which the earl of Derby won a considerable victory at Auberche. On the other hand the murder of Jacques van Artevelde, the virtual ruler of Flanders and a strong partisan of England, made the prospects of effectual support from the Flemings worse than ever. The English Parliament, though desiring peace, probably realised that it was hopeless except at the price of abandoning Guienne, and therefore wisely desired that war should be waged in earnest. Great preparations were made for the campaign of 1346, which the king was to conduct in person. The king of France had raised a very large army, which was commanded by his son the duke of Normandy, and which early in 1346 occupied part of the English possessions in the south-west of France. The obvious thing for Edward to do with the large expedition he was fitting out was to defend his own provinces, since Flanders now offered a very unpromising field. Instead of this he decided suddenly to invade Normandy,¹ and on July 12 he landed at Cape La Hogue.

¹ This is said by Froissart to have been done on the advice of Godfrey of Harcourt, who was certainly one of the king's most trusted officers during the campaign, habitually leading the advanced guard.

OUTLINE MAP
to illustrate the
CAMPAIGNS of CRECY
& AGINCOURT.



BATTLE of CRECY
(26th Aug 1346)



- a Park with Horses etc
- b Windmill
- c. Front of English: dotted Line
Archers, thick line "MEN AT ARMS";
(dismounted)

There is no evidence that Edward had formed any coherent plan of operations. Able tactician as he showed himself at Crecy, he was no strategist; indeed no one in that age had any idea of strategical combinations, though of course it is easy after the event to see that a particular direction given to an army was or was not judicious from this point of view. This invasion of France might have been an extremely brilliant stroke. The English command of the sea made it feasible to land almost anywhere; the main French army was engaged in the south-west: there were no preparations for attempting to meet invasion anywhere else. Had Edward landed near the mouth of the Seine, at the nearest point to the capital, and marched straight on Paris, he would have had the king of France almost at his mercy, for Paris might have been in his hands before the duke of Normandy could come to its rescue. Instead of this, Edward landed at the extremity of the Cotentin peninsula, and then marched in a leisurely way through Normandy, capturing and plundering town after town, there being virtually no resistance. The absolute vagueness of his intentions may be gathered from his having sent away his fleet, laden with the booty of the Norman towns, thus depriving himself of the means of retreat in case of need. If Froissart is to be believed, he had already determined to march on Calais and attempt to seize it; but if so, it is still more difficult to explain his having landed in the Cotentin, Calais being within a march or two of Flanders, where if he had not met with much support he would have at least found a friendly reception. The only thing which looks as if he really meant to go towards Calais is that having reached Louviers, he seems to have marched some way down the Seine again towards Rouen; but this may have been in the hope of being able to plunder the capital of Normandy. The French meanwhile had broken down all the bridges on the Seine, which can only have been in order to prevent the English from extending their ravages to the right bank of the Seine, as it was obvious that they could reach the coast as easily on one side as on the other. Whatever may have been his original plan, or want of one, Edward, unable to cross the Seine in Normandy, did what he ought to have done weeks before, and marched up the

left bank towards Paris. The king of France had used the breathing time unwisely allowed him to collect an army, which is said to have amounted to 100,000 men. Why he made no attempt to interfere with Edward earlier is a mystery. The English king marched unopposed to Poissy, a few miles below Paris, and there amused himself, while the bridge was being rebuilt, in ravaging the country to the very gates of the capital; he no doubt knew that the city was by this time full of soldiers, and therefore not open to attack. On August 16 the bridge was finished, and Edward crossed the Seine, his advanced guard having a sharp but successful fight with a large body of men coming from Amiens to join king Philip. Seeing that the huge French army was gathered at St. Denis, on the right bank, nearly half-way to Poissy, it is equally mysterious to find Edward crossing the Seine close to an enormously superior force, and Philip making no attempt to take him at a disadvantage. However Edward had by this time resolved on making for Flanders, and marched hastily northwards, sending out a strong detachment to endeavour to seize some point of passage over the Somme. As was natural, these were all broken or defended; Edward went on down the Somme, with an enemy of four or five times his strength behind him, till on August 23 he came opposite Abbeville, below which the river becomes a tidal estuary. The town was fortified and garrisoned, and there was a large body of troops on the right bank: it looked as if Edward's reckless movements had led him at last into a trap, as if the king of France had achieved a success which his own military management had by no means deserved. In the nick of time a peasant told Edward of a ford some way below Abbeville, broad and firm, but available only at low water. Early on the morning of the 24th the English army crossed by this ford, the archers giving a foretaste of what was to happen at Crecy by completely driving off the French force stationed to defend it. They were barely across when Philip was upon them; but the rising tide prevented pursuit.

Edward was now safe: he had only a short march before him to reach Flanders. Here however the spirit of chivalry took possession of him: he chose to turn and await battle,

saying that he was now in his own heritage,¹ and would defend it against the usurper. Accordingly he encamped on August 25 near the little village of Crecy, and selected a position in which to give battle, into which he moved the next morning. The army was divided as usual into three "battles," each consisting of about 800 men-at-arms and 2000 archers, besides light-armed infantry, chiefly Welsh. The prince of Wales commanded the first, the earl of Northampton the second: the king kept the third, which was to act as a reserve, under his own immediate orders. The exact position is not easy to determine: but it was on a piece of sloping ground, with a wind-mill on the upper part of it at which the king took up his station, facing the south-east or nearly so. The French attacked in such a hasty and irrational manner that it is not safe to infer anything from what they did: but certainly they did not attempt, with all their vast superiority of numbers, to turn Edward's position. A competent tactician would most probably have taken care that his flanks were protected in some way; and therefore it is probable that the English right rested on Crecy, through which flows the little river Maye, in which case its left may have been covered by the adjoining hamlet of Wadicourt. This position is shown in the accompanying map, not as ascertained, but as answering well to the conditions.

The essential novelty in Edward's tactics, the fact which makes Crecy an epoch in the history of the art of war, was that having to fight with very inferior numbers he discerned an effective way of combining the two elements of his army. He caused all the men-at-arms to dismount, and placed the horses with the baggage in an enclosed park in rear. The men-at-arms were to serve simply as spearmen, like the Scots at Falkirk and Bannockburn: they were to form the solid line of resistance, while the archers shot down the assailants. There is a certain discrepancy between the accounts, as to the position of the archers. Froissart says

¹ He was in the county of Ponthieu, which had been the portion of Margaret of France, second wife of Edward I. He was not descended from her, but from Eleanor of Castile: there does not however seem to have been any provision for Ponthieu being inherited by Margaret's children.

that they were drawn up in front, after the fashion of a harrow (*herse*).¹ Baker of Swinbrook says very precisely that they were put on the wings, so as not to be in the way of the men-at-arms, nor meet the enemy in front, but shoot into their flanks. The two may be reconciled, if we bear in mind that the archers would naturally not be drawn up in the same straight line with the men-at-arms, but thrown forward at an angle, so as to allow them to shoot more freely at the advancing enemy. Moreover it is certain that the prince of Wales' "battle" was on the right, in front, Northampton's on the left, a very little further back, perhaps because of some slight irregularity in the ground. If each division had part of its archers on each flank, thrown somewhat forward, the two inner lines of archers would meet at an angle: and the whole front would present an appearance not very unlike a harrow.²



All through the middle of the day (August 26) the English sat in their lines, waiting quietly for the enemy. As evening drew near the French host came in sight: the knights and men-at-arms were divided into nine "battles," but no attempt had been made to form any plan of action, or even to make the commanders of them understand that

¹ *Herse* has another and less familiar meaning, which still better corresponds to the formation indicated—the stands used in churches for seven candles, the centre one forming the apex, and those at the sides gradually lower.

² This theory is so far as I know novel, and I put it forward as a suggestion for what it may be worth. It explains, I venture to think, the extraordinary success of the English tactics, and it contradicts no ascertained facts. Every one who knows a little about drill will see that in this formation the archers would be able to change the direction of their shooting with perfect ease, and without interfering with each other. The archers cannot have been on the flanks of the whole line only, or their arrows, long as the range was, would not have told across the whole front. They could obviously move with ease and rapidity, and it is quite possible that they may have formed a line in front of the dismounted men-at-arms, when no attack was impending, as for instance to encounter the Genoese, and have fallen back to the *herse* when the knights were seen preparing to charge.

they were expected to obey general orders. There was also a large body, 15,000 it is said, of Genoese cross-bowmen, besides an indefinite number of ill-armed peasants who only served to cumber the space. On hearing from certain knights who had pushed forward that the English were drawn up to await attack, the king of France, in accordance with their advice, ordered a halt, intending his army to bivouac where it was, and to form regularly for battle the next morning. On the word being given, the front halted, but those in rear pushed on, saying they would not halt till they were equal with those in front. Neither the king nor the marshals could assert any authority over the rabble of nobles and knights, and they advanced anyhow till they were close in front of the English position. Then the king, seeing that it was too late to avoid an action, ordered the Genoese forward. Just as the sun was close on its setting, and shining full in the face of the French line, the battle began. The cross-bowmen advanced, shouting, but the English never stirred; presently they began to shoot. The English archers then took one step forward, and shot their arrows with such force and quickness that it seemed to be snowing. The cross-bow bolts fell short: the clothyard arrows totally discomfited the Genoese,¹ already worn out with a long hot march. Therefore the king of France, with the true feudal contempt for all that was not noble, bade the men-at-arms trample down these rascals. The knights, nothing loth, rode over the unhappy Genoese, and charged tumultuously on the English front. Men and horses went down in heaps before the arrows, which were shot from both flanks into the surging mob. Those who escaped fell furiously on the English line, and were with difficulty kept at bay. It shows how blindly the French came on, that the main stress fell on the prince of Wales, who was on the right, and therefore in the part of the line nearest to the French coming from Abbeville: Northampton on his left seems to have had much less to do. Time after time the French charged,

¹ There is no need to insist on the picturesque detail of the rain which fell just before the battle having wetted the strings of the cross-bows, while the English kept their bows under cover. It may well have been true: but the range of the long-bow was always greater than that of the cross-bow.

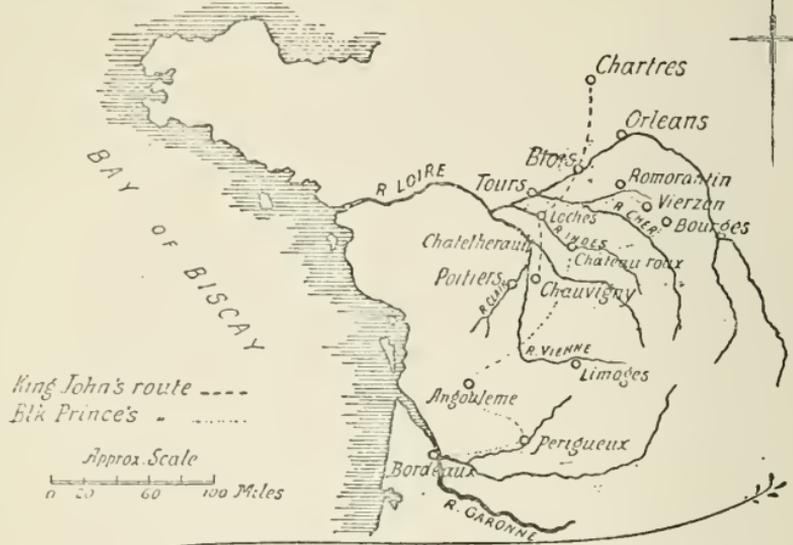
with the effect of adding to the heaps of dead and wounded : between the charges the English bill-men slipped out through the front line to kill and take prisoners. Edward, who was watching the whole course of the action from his post on the higher ground, was once appealed to for help for his son : he could see that there was no real need, and refused it, saying, according to the well-known story, "Let the boy win his spurs." One account tells how the king sent twenty knights down, who found the prince and his men sitting on the heaps of slain, resting themselves while the enemy were withdrawn and preparing for a fresh charge. Darkness at length put an end to the battle. Edward was far too prudent to attempt a counter attack : he owed his victory to firmly maintaining the position he had chosen, and could not afford to risk a disaster by quitting it. The slaughter on the French side had been frightful—4000 knights and men-at-arms, and uncounted multitudes besides : the English loss had naturally been but slight.

A tinge of romance is always supposed to be thrown over Crecy by the conduct of the blind king of Bohemia, who caused some of his knights to lead him in one of the charges, the bridles of the whole party being fastened together, with the natural result of all being killed. But as he had no sort of concern with the quarrel, one feels rather inclined to dismiss him with Polonius' epithet—

"Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell."

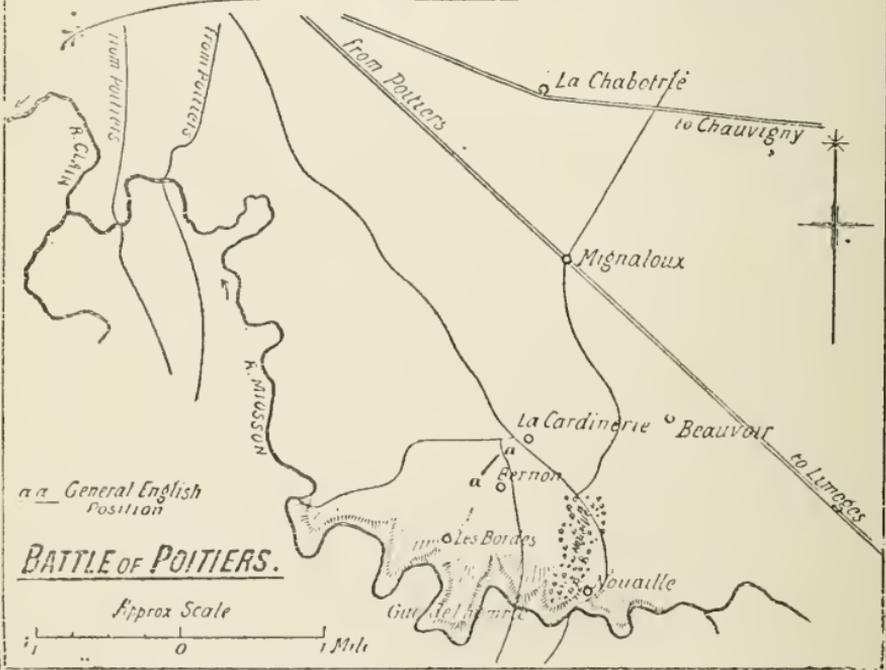
It would seem as if, after such a victory, Edward III. might have resumed the offensive, with good prospect of reducing the king of France to sue for peace. But it must be remembered that his army was relatively small, that the battle had been won in a defensive position, and that he could not possibly know how soon he might find himself face to face with the duke of Normandy's army recalled from Guienne. It rather speaks well for Edward's military judgment that he should have quietly carried out his previous design, and marched on Calais, which he succeeded in taking after an unexpectedly long siege, and which furnished from that day forth a ready door into France. Small however as the direct and immediate results of the battle of Crecy were, it was in its ultimate consequences of

MAP of W. CENTRAL FRANCE.



King John's route - - -
Elk Princes'

Approx. Scale
0 20 60 100 Miles



BATTLE OF POITIERS.

Approx. Scale
0 1 Mile

incalculable importance. Superficially it resembles Bannockburn : a very superior army, badly and presumptuously led, attacks an inferior enemy well posted for defence, and is decisively and deservedly beaten. The difference lies a little deeper, in the fact that the foremost kingdom in Europe in point of national organisation, ruled as it was by a king who was the mirror of chivalry, adopted tactics which could and must overthrow feudal chivalry. All ranks and classes fought side by side, and fought on foot ; the men-at-arms, the archers, the bill-men all contributed their share. Such a victory would naturally stimulate national feeling more than twenty won by the knights alone. And such victories, as the event showed, were sure to be repeated, as often as opportunity offered. The French, as will be seen, were slow to learn the lesson : but from Crecy may fairly be dated the preponderance of infantry, though much time elapsed, and many changes in the battle-field were seen, before this was finally established.

The capture of Calais in 1347 was followed by a truce, which, largely on account of the frightful ravages of the Black Death in both countries, was renewed again and again. In 1350 Philip VI. died, and was succeeded by his son John, who continued his father's policy. Year after year there were acts of hostility, chiefly but by no means exclusively on the French side, and abortive negotiations for peace. Edward offered repeatedly to resign his claims to the French crown on terms, but the price he asked was larger than the king of France could be expected to pay. At length in 1355 Edward was led by offered co-operation from the king of Navarre, which however came to nothing, to invade France in earnest once more. Two subsidiary expeditions were foiled by the winds, but the main one was carried out, and led to the great victory of Poitiers. The Black Prince, who commanded it, and who thenceforth was his father's representative in France, led a successful plundering expedition from Bordeaux across the south of France, but avoided serious fighting. Early in July the next year the prince started for a similar expedition on a larger scale, striking this time into the very heart of France. Two or three weeks earlier, the duke of Lancaster had left Brittany to unite with some Norman nobles who had risen

in rebellion : and it is supposed by some writers that the two invasions were parts of a concerted scheme, by which the English hoped finally to conquer France. The direction of the Black Prince's march, the leisurely character of his proceedings, and the amount of plunder carried off, make this view highly improbable. Ignorance of topography, and the necessity of avoiding strong places which could not be captured, might account for some deviations from the straight route ; the necessity of living on the country might account for the loss of a few days. It is not impossible that, aiming merely at the Loire, he should have gone as far east as Vierzon, instead of taking the direct route by Poitiers to Tours. But it is incredible that with such an object in view he should have consumed about three times the number of days necessary for covering the distance, or that he should have deliberately burdened his march with vast quantities of plunder. The prince was certainly a competent soldier for his age : and all accounts agree that his army was thoroughly under control, and that the plundering was systematic. He doubtless knew of his cousin's enterprise : but that there was intended to be real co-operation between them could only be believed on very good and positive evidence, which does not exist.

The duke of Lancaster had in fact effected nothing : he had been obliged to retreat before the vastly superior armies brought to bear against him : but king John was still occupied in reducing the rebellious towns, when he heard somewhat tardily of the Black Prince's march. He instantly went to Chartres, and there gathered a large army, besides garrisoning every town on the Loire, to guard against the Black Prince crossing that river and making his way into Normandy.

The prince had by this time reached Vierzon, after plundering and destroying unresisted across Angoumois, La Marche and Berri. He there heard that the king of France was assembling a large army on the Loire, and therefore gave up all thought of continuing his elaborate raid. One would have thought that the necessity of prompt action, seeing that he had only from 8000 to 10,000 men, would have been sufficiently obvious : but the chivalric point of honour was of so much importance that he wasted

several days in taking the castle of Romorantin, which had offered unexpected resistance. It was a fortunate piece of rashness, for otherwise the French king would not have compelled him to fight at Poitiers.

There seems to be no doubt that the Black Prince thought of crossing the Loire; but this gives no real support to the theory that his whole expedition was made in concert with Lancaster. Of course each was generally aware that the other was going to move, which would imply the possibility, if both succeeded, of their meeting somewhere thereabouts; but this is a very long way from deliberate co-operation. He might well have thought that if he could pass the Loire he would have as safe a refuge, would harass and perplex the French king more, and would not seem to have been driven to retreat; otherwise he would certainly have never gone near Poitiers, but would have followed a line of retreat as straight on Bordeaux as possible, every march in which would take him further from king John's overwhelming army. Some of the authorities trace his route, some do not; the places named do not always agree, and are not all to be certainly identified. The most precise of them says that he went straight to Tours, remained near that city several days hoping to cross the river there, and decamped south on hearing that the French king was crossing at Blois. The same account states that king John through his scouts was acquainted with the prince's movements: if so, one would think he ought to have made a little more haste. When he did move however the French king marched not straight towards his enemy, but in a direction intended to intercept his retreat, a piece of strategy which may seem obvious enough, but not so common in the middle ages. From Loches he directed his army on Poitiers, the main part with the king in person crossing the Vienne at the bridge of Chauvigny, fifteen miles east of that city. The slight information which each side had of the other, seems to have failed totally at the critical juncture. On Friday September 16 king John slept between Chauvigny and Poitiers, in complete ignorance where the Black Prince was. The same night the prince was a few miles north of the Chauvigny-Poitiers road, in equal ignorance that his enemy was between him and safety. Starting early on the

17th, the prince took, none too soon, the precaution of sending a small troop of men-at-arms forward to reconnoitre. These fell in with the last of king John's great army to cross the bridge of Chauvigny; it would be an abuse of language to call them a rearguard. Outnumbered four to one, the English¹ fell back on the main body, and the French pursuing heedlessly were nearly all killed or captured. The prince, thus warned of the proximity of his enemy, pushed on a few miles further, till he was well on the Bordeaux side of Poitiers, and there halted. King John, on hearing the news, ordered his forces to retrace their steps, and passed the night of the 17th about three miles south-east of Poitiers.

The locality of the battle of Poitiers, or Maupertuis as the French name it, has now been ascertained. Documentary evidence shows that the spot formerly called Maupertuis is La Cardinerie, a farm near the Limoges road, about five miles south-east of Poitiers. This disposes of the theory of the battle, based upon expressions of the chroniclers to the effect that the Black Prince could not help fighting, that the French army was between him and Bordeaux. It also destroys all ground for the charge against king John of wasteful folly in attacking his enemy strongly posted, when that enemy had no choice, unless he would starve or surrender, but to attack an enormously superior force. The Black Prince, it is clear, was not cut off: he had the choice between standing to fight, and attempting to escape from the French, who were within two or three miles of him, and several times his strength. There is no doubt, further, that the Black Prince selected the strongest position available, fortified it to the best of his power, and there awaited attack. He evidently thought that it was scarcely possible to get away in safety, or else he would certainly not have halted comparatively early in the day.

The position was a strong one, for the arms of that age.

¹ It is convenient to use this word for those who were fighting in the English cause: but as a matter of fact two-thirds of the Black Prince's men-at-arms were from among his Gascon subjects, and the *servientes* therefore in about the same proportion. The archers doubtless were all, or nearly all, English: there is no trace of the long-bow except in English armies.

Like his father, the Black Prince, though his strategy might be faulty, possessed great tactical skill, and coolness in encountering danger. The essentials for his situation were, ample scope for his archers, all possible impediments to the French horsemen, and some security against being attacked on all sides at once, seeing how great were the odds against him. All these conditions he managed to fulfil, and all would hardly have sufficed to save him from destruction, but for the disastrous blunder of the French, in dismounting to attack.

The scene of the battle is slightly undulating country, the variations of level being only a few feet. The chroniclers, to whom language for expressing minute differences was wanting, talk of hills and deep valleys, and have thereby misled writers who have not seen the ground, nor examined with attention a contoured map. South-eastwards from Poitiers runs the modern Limoges road, almost parallel to an ancient Roman road, which may have been still the working road of the fourteenth century. A small rivulet, the Miosson, flows at the bottom of a ravine, about 100 feet below the level of the battle-field, and joins the Clain just above Poitiers. The bottom is presumably muddy, and the quantity of water varies greatly with the season. But there is a ford (the Gué de l'Homme marked on the map) to which a narrow road, believed on good evidence to be ancient, leads from close to La Cardinerie. That farm itself is not so old as the battle, having taken the place of the hamlet of Maupertuis, which stood somewhere in the same neighbourhood, and is said to have been destroyed at the time of the battle. Maupertuis was¹ supplied with water from a pond, now almost filled up, which used to be

¹ I am indebted for these details, except so far as they are from my own observation, to Colonel Babinet, a retired French officer living at Poitiers, who has published in the *Bulletin des Antiquaires de l'Ouest* a very elaborate memoir on the battle, which he has kindly supplemented by private letters. His study of the topography has been most minute, and his conclusions about it, so far as I can judge, are entirely sound. If there were many investigators as patient and careful, historians would find many battles less perplexing. Every one who attempts to understand the battle of Poitiers must feel grateful to Colonel Babinet, even if he does not accept all that gentleman's views as to the course of events.¹

known as "la mare aux Anglais," and out of which sundry relics of the battle have been taken. The overflow of this pond, and doubtless the surface drainage of the immediate neighbourhood, which in rainy weather might be considerable, passed down a very slight hollow running nearly north and south on the Poitiers side of La Cardinerie. As the soil is soft, and the slope very gentle till near the Miosson, the bottom of this hollow may well have been boggy. It is a good illustration of the exaggerated impression conveyed by the defective vocabulary of the chroniclers, that this depression of a very few feet is the place best answering to the *profunda vallis*, and the *torrens* of Baker of Swinbrook, the chronicler whose narrative of the battle has a far greater air of precision in details than any other.

Not far on the east side of this little depression was the Black Prince's position. His front was covered by a hedge with a ditch in front: Baker expressly mentions a *sepes subterfossata*, and it was the usual custom in Poitou to fence in this way. Behind it was a space partly planted with vines, but by no means clear of bushes, on which the English encamped. The hedge was apparently on rather lower ground, for the French knights sent to reconnoitre were able to bring back a pretty accurate report of the position and numbers of the enemy. Somewhere in this hedge was a gap left for carts to reach the upper level, the hedge apparently curving up to it so as to form a sort of funnel-shaped opening. There is now no long hedge anywhere east of the wood of Nouaillé, half a mile to the south-eastwards; but hedges and ditches disappear easily in a fertile soil under continuous cultivation. It is most probable, though it cannot be said to be certainly known, that the Black Prince's hedge ran from very near La Cardinerie towards the hamlet of Les Bordes, and that through the gap passed the road to the Gué de l'Homme.

On the morning of Sunday September 18, king John, according to Froissart, sent some knights to reconnoitre the English position, which he proposed to attack at once. On hearing their report, the king, we are told, asked them in what way the attack should be made; and Eustace de Ribeaumont, their chief, advised the king to make all his men-at-arms dismount, except a few who were to charge and

break the English archers. According to Baker of Swinbrook the advice was given by a Douglas, who had fought many times against the English, and affirmed that the English always dismounted their men-at-arms, ever since their defeat at Bannockburn. Whoever gave the advice, it was suicidal folly. A little learning is proverbially a dangerous thing; probably the most dangerous form which a little learning can assume is to know a fact, and to draw utterly baseless and absurd inferences from it. Edward II. was not routed at Bannockburn because his men-at-arms fought on horseback, but because they attacked in a confused and tumultuous manner on ground too narrow for their numbers. Edward III. did not win Crecy merely because his men-at-arms fought on foot, but because he had learned, alike from the victory of Falkirk and from the defeat of Bannockburn, how to combine the destroying force of archers with the defensive firmness of spearmen on foot. Moreover the difference between offensive and defensive tactics is fundamental. Horsemen obviously by dismounting lose most of their *momentum* for attack; as obviously, they cannot in any other way stand firm to sustain a charge. Want of numbers compelled the English, at Crecy and at Poitiers alike, to stand on the defensive: therefore, and therefore only, their men-at-arms abandoned their natural mode of fighting.

Reminiscences of Crecy may well have inclined king John to try whether some other tactics would not succeed better than the tumultuous rush of mailed horsemen straight on a front better protected than at Crecy: but the choice he made, whether inspired by sheer stupidity, or dictated by the insane class pride which refused to see in the plebeian archers the real victors over noble knights, was the worst possible. With his overwhelming numbers he could have surrounded the English; he could have kept them fully occupied in resisting attack while detaching a superior force to cut their retreat; he could have done anything he pleased. His defeat was even more crushing than his father's, and was all the more discreditable, in that it was due to his own deliberate orders, and not to the undisciplined rush of nobles too vain-glorious to obey.

Before the battle could begin, however, the cardinal of

Perigord begged John to let him try to arrange terms with the Black Prince. There was some division on the subject in the French councils, some of the king's advisers thinking that the English could not escape destruction, and that therefore any concession was folly. The king ultimately consented, and the whole day was spent by the cardinal in going to and fro between the two camps. The accounts vary as to the exact course of these negotiations: very possibly several offers and counter offers were exchanged. The king, if he thought his enemies in his power, may reasonably have proposed very severe terms as the price of their lives; the prince was apparently ready to concede a good deal; but all the efforts of the cardinal were unavailing to bring about an agreement. Whatever the terms finally offered by the king of France may have been, they were such as the prince felt he could not honourably accept, while an appeal to the arbitrament of battle was still open. The delay enabled the English to improve their defences, probably by intrenching on their right flank and rear, which had been protected on their first taking up the position by a *lager* of waggons. It was injurious in another way, as they were very short of food; but this mattered little, as the morrow must bring victory or destruction.

Down to the morning of September 19, the day of the battle, every detail can be determined, if not with certainty, yet with reasonable probability. At this point, however, we encounter very serious difficulties. The two authorities which describe the battle minutely, Froissart and Baker, differ from one another in points too important to be called details, though they agree in representing the Black Prince as having remained in his position. The Chandos Herald, whose testimony is *primâ facie* deserving of the highest respect, affirms that the prince had in the night made up his mind to retreat, that he had sent off his vanguard to convey the baggage across the stream, and would have followed with his whole army, had not the French made haste to attack the rear-guard. The discrepancy is obviously fundamental;¹

¹ The Chandos Herald was in the service of Sir John Chandos, one of the Black Prince's best officers. The herald was not apparently present, but he obviously must have had every means of knowing about the battle, in which Sir John fought; he did not, however, publish his

one side or the other must start from a total misconception, and if so, it is hardly worth while to speculate as to what rags of truth may be left in the narrative.

The Black Prince's army was as usual divided into three parts, under the earl of Warwick, the prince himself, and the earl of Salisbury. The numbers are disputed, the French being naturally inclined to raise the total, the English to diminish it. The authorities on the English side agree in giving about 8000, and they obviously would have the best means of knowing. A real element of uncertainty is, however, always present, in the doubt whether the attendants on the knights are to be added, or are meant to be included in the number given of other soldiers besides the men-at-arms and archers. Probably it would be safe to affirm that the number did not exceed 10,000 of all arms. Having to fight a

rhymed narrative till some thirty years later. Froissart, who was nineteen years old in 1356, devoted his whole life to the work of his history; he was familiar with courts, if not with camps, indefatigable in acquiring information, but not critical. He too had ample opportunities of learning all about the battle of Poitiers, at any rate from the English side. The manuscripts of Froissart, however, vary greatly, which casts a certain doubt over the trustworthiness of such details as are not given identically in all. Baker was a clerk of Swinbrook in Oxfordshire: the last words of his chronicle were written before the peace of Bretigny in 1360, so that he was even more strictly contemporary than Froissart. Several passages in his history, in which he makes very definite statements about the tactics of the long-bow, prove that he, or his informant, understood military matters well. None of them can have seen the ground, and therefore no stress need be laid on minor inaccuracies of description. Mistakes about the names of actors in the drama might easily be made: all that can be said is that the writer who has made fewest errors has a slightly better claim to general credibility. None of them can be deemed likely to have deliberately misrepresented, or to have been totally misinformed about the ground-work of the whole story. Yet there is the fact, that their narratives are substantially contradictory. Critical ingenuity may no doubt patch up some sort of superficial reconciliation between them, but it can only be superficial. Under these conditions I have no alternative but to follow the narrative which seems to be most in accordance with the known facts. I am not ignorant of the difficulties involved in this course, but my plan does not admit of a full discussion of every point that might be raised. On the whole I incline to discard the Chandos Herald, the more so because none of the less detailed narratives support him, and as between Froissart and Baker, to prefer the latter. My account of the actual battle will therefore follow the chronicle of Baker of Swinbrook, in all matters in which he and Froissart are completely at variance.

defensive action against very superior forces, the prince necessarily resorted to tactics much like those of Crecy. The earl of Warwick's division, comprising comparatively a large proportion of archers, lined the hedge in front. Salisbury's men-at-arms, dismounted, were drawn up in line, a stone's-throw back from the gap in the hedge, with archers on their flanks, who would naturally be thrown forwards. The prince's own "battle" he moved¹ up on to a gentle eminence on one flank; this was at the spot marked Bernon on the map, and on the left flank, assuming Colonel Babinet to be right in his identification of the position. From this point he returned after the battle had begun, to sustain Warwick and Salisbury, except that he throughout kept some hundreds of men-at-arms mounted, in reserve.

The numbers on the French side are stated with much greater discrepancy than on the English. Froissart gives no less than 60,000, but there seems reason to believe that the real amount was about 40,000, or fully four times the Black Prince's total. A picked body of 500 horsemen, under the two marshals Audrehen and Clermont, was to lead the attack. This was followed by the first of the main "battles" under the duke of Normandy, John's eldest son. The second was commanded by his brother the duke of Orleans, the third by the king in person; both of these remained apparently at some distance. As the marshals advanced up the funnel-shaped opening leading to the gap, which was itself only wide enough for four horsemen abreast, the archers, protected by the hedge, poured in volleys of arrows. Thanks to their armour, the French were not all shot down, and engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with Salisbury's men, ranked beyond the gap. The first French line, as they followed, engaged with Warwick's troops along the whole line of the hedge.

Seeing that many arrows were broken on the stout

¹ According to Baker, the prince began this movement *cum cariagiis*, to which, however, there is no further reference. It is obviously possible that the prince may have wished to get the baggage out of the way, and therefore started it towards the Gué de l'Homme, and that he shifted his troops in order to cover this from the French. If so, this would be the element of truth in the Chandos Herald's narrative; but it does not in any way remove the essential contradiction between the Chandos Herald and the other authorities.

armour, or glanced from it, the earl of Oxford bade the archers, who were closing round the flank and rear of the mounted force, aim at the horses, which were less protected. In this way the horsemen were soon routed; one marshal was killed, the other taken prisoner, their immediate command was nearly destroyed, and the whole first line was driven back in confusion. The temptation to pursue must have been strong: but the English leaders knew that their work was only begun. They reformed their ranks, and awaited a fresh attack, which was not long in coming. The French second line under the duke of Orleans advanced in its turn, and after a similar struggle was repulsed even more completely. Still the English commanders would not allow pursuit, though Sir Maurice Berkeley¹ charged on his own private account into the retreating mass, and was, as might be expected, taken prisoner, desperately wounded, after performing prodigies of valour. The breathing time was spent in carrying back the wounded into safety behind the hedges, and in gathering as many arrows as possible, for the stock was running short. It speaks volumes for the deadliness of the shooting at that short range, that the chronicler speaks of the archers drawing the arrows out of the bodies of the dead and wounded, not picking them up from the ground. The French king, on hearing that his son had been beaten back, swore solemnly that he would not leave the field that day, unless dead or a prisoner, and led on the third line. The English, all of whom, except the prince's small reserve, had now been fighting for hours against heavy odds, were nearly worn out; a great many had been wounded, and the numbers left seemed too small to withstand another onset. At this juncture some dismay was caused by the Captal de Buch, a Gascon noble who won a great reputation

¹ Froissart calls him Thomas lord of Berkeley, a young man in his first battle, and says he was son of Sir Maurice Berkeley, who died at Calais a few years before. Thomas the then lord of Berkeley, and elder brother of that Sir Maurice, was in the battle, but he was a man of over fifty, and he had his son Maurice with him for his first campaign. That Baker should be right, and Froissart wrong, on a point peculiarly within Froissart's province, is a striking incidental testimony to Baker's trustworthiness.

in the latter part of the war, riding off the field followed by a handful of men-at-arms and a hundred archers. It was naturally imagined that he was flying or deserting : instead of this, he had obtained the prince's permission to make a bold stroke for victory, by circling round the French flank and attacking them in their left rear. This third conflict was the severest of all, the more so as the archers, their arrows being exhausted, had to resort to their bills. At length the Captal de Buch was seen emerging from beyond the slightly rising ground which had masked his movements from the French, displaying the red cross of St. George as a signal : thereupon the Black Prince charged with his reserve of mounted men-at-arms. The day was finally won : though the king of France fought on desperately for awhile, showing himself as good soldier as he was bad general, he was at length obliged to surrender himself prisoner.

A long list of nobles and knights interred in the churches of Poitiers, another long list of distinguished captives, mark the overwhelming nature of the defeat which the French had sustained. So great was the number of prisoners that the Black Prince released a very large part, on their undertaking to pay their ransom at Bordeaux. The English loss must have been severe, relatively to the force engaged, though no authoritative figures can be given. The French of course lost much more heavily ; but the mere number of slain was as nothing compared to the crushing effect of the unexpected blow. Had there been any spirit of resistance left in the French, the Black Prince could hardly have reached Bordeaux in safety. The relics of the army defeated at Poitiers must have amounted to several times his diminished force : yet he carried off his noble prisoners, with all the spoil of the royal camp and of his previous raid, without a trace of opposition.

It would almost seem as if Edward III. and his son never seriously contemplated the subjugation of France : for instead of attempting to take advantage of the virtual dissolution of all government resulting from the defeat of Poitiers and the king's capture, the Black Prince returned to England with his prisoner. The treaty of Bretigny, by which Edward resigned his claims to the French crown, and the French king abandoned all suzerainty over the south-west, was a

reasonable solution of the difficulty, if nothing had been at stake but the personal pretensions of the two monarchs. But the national feelings of the French were too strongly roused: the treaty was never carried out. John's son and successor Charles V., or rather his military adviser the Constable Duguesclin, learned wisdom from the crushing defeats of Crecy and Poitiers, and steadily abstained from confronting English armies in the field. All the arts of minor warfare, raids, surprise of castles, cutting off of small parties, were adopted against the English, and the success though slow was steady, and was twofold. Outnumbered from the nature of the case, the English could not but lose in a war thus carried on; and the French subjects of the Black Prince were alienated, through being exposed both to injury at the hands of their own countrymen, and to heavy demands on their resources made by the prince to help him fight a losing game. Gradually things went more and more against the English, until by the time the Black Prince's health failed, and he went home to die, little was left beyond a few towns, which were bound to England by commercial ties. Nor was this all; in the second active stage of the great war, when Henry V. was formally accepted as heir to the French crown, the south-west was the region in which the cause of the Dauphin, the national cause, was most steadily supported.

CHAPTER VI

AGINCOURT AND ORLEANS

FOR nearly forty years after the death of the Black Prince the English pretensions against France lay dormant. Something like friendly relations existed from time to time between the two countries: Richard II. even contracted a marriage with a French princess, though he was deposed before his child bride was grown up. Cordial peace however was impossible: the English possessions in Guienne were a standing temptation to French ambition and patriotism: the English claim to the French crown was a standing provocation. That claim had by no means been forgotten: the glories of Crecy and Poitiers had made a deeper impression than the slow failure of the following years, the burden of which had fallen much more heavily on Guienne than on England. To the English mind the pretensions of their kings to the throne of France had become a national rather than a personal matter. It was England that considered herself entitled to dominate over France, rather than an individual claiming an inheritance for himself. Richard II. had been succeeded by his cousin the duke of Lancaster, who reigned by a perfectly valid national title, formally voted by Parliament, and substantially accepted by the country as a whole. He was, as it happened, the heir male of Edward III., heir according to the theory embodied in the Salic law which France had made her rule of succession: but he was not the heir of Edward III. according to the theory which alone could render valid Edward III.'s claim to France. What is commonly said in relation to Edward is strictly true of Henry V.: if his contention was based on a sound theory, it held good in favour of some one else.

There is no trace of this being recognised in England: Henry V. was the lawful king of England, lawful successor of his great-grandfather, and might reasonably urge his great-grandfather's pretensions.

The state of France at the date of the accession of Henry V. was deplorable. The king, Charles VI., had long been mad; his occasional lucid intervals, when he was supposed to resume the reins of government, only served to make confusion worse. The queen was one of the worst of women, without the great abilities which went some way towards atoning for the wickedness of Catharine de Medicis or her namesake of Russia. The Dauphin was a dissolute and reckless boy. All good government was lost: for power was disputed by two bitterly hostile factions, each of which used it in turn for its own purposes. One was headed by the duke of Burgundy, cousin of the king, son of the boy who was taken prisoner at Poitiers beside his father king John. The other, which bore the name of Armagnacs,¹ was headed by the young duke of Orleans, the king's nephew, between whom and John of Burgundy there was an irreconcilable blood-feud. The statesmanship of France was not ill-represented by the Dauphin's insult to Henry V., in sending him a present of balls at his accession, with a message implying that he deemed the young king, perhaps the ablest man of his age, little better than a child. Shakespeare makes much of the story that the archbishop of Canterbury urged Henry to undertake war with France, in order to divert his attention from ecclesiastical affairs at home. Whatever weight this may have had, the opportunity was obvious, and Henry was very well competent to use it.

In August 1415 Henry V. landed at the mouth of the Seine, with a well-equipped army of about 30,000 men. No better point for an invasion could be chosen: there was a good harbour for his base, and almost the shortest distance from the sea-shore to Paris is straight up the Seine. Before however he could advance Harfleur must be taken, and this cost an unexpectedly long time. More than a

¹ The name was derived from Bernard Count of Armagnac, the duke's father-in-law, who gave the party most of its energy.

month elapsed before the town surrendered; and then it is suggested that dysentery, which was raging alike inside and outside the walls, was largely answerable for the surrender. The siege was conducted entirely by battering, like a siege of three or four centuries later: probably the comparative slowness and inadequacy of the cannonade was more or less balanced by the inferiority of the defensive works to those of later times. When the town had fallen (or was on the point of falling, for the date is not quite certain), Henry sent a message to the Dauphin, offering to settle the dispute by single combat with him, as his father was incapacitated. The proposal is altogether in the style of chivalry, and was doubtless considered the right and proper thing to do: but seeing that the Dauphin was a weak and debauched lad, and Henry in the very prime of vigour, there was nothing really high-minded about it. Henry deemed himself bound to wait for an answer, and during the interval resolved on his course of action. His army had been frightfully reduced by illness as well as by the losses in the siege: we are told that 5000 men had to be sent home invalided, besides the large number who died. A garrison was also wanted for Harfleur; altogether the king could not move with above a third of his original force. The accounts given from the English side, which are numerous and unusually circumstantial, vary only slightly: and one French writer, who expressly says that he saw the English army, agrees pretty closely with them. French writers in general had only hearsay to guide them, and had every motive to exaggerate the English numbers. Of men-at-arms Henry had left from 800 to 1000, of archers five or six thousand, besides other foot-soldiers who were probably about half as numerous. Whatever the number was, it had suffered no material change before the battle of Agincourt.

With such an insignificant force, offensive operations were out of the question. Prudence obviously suggested, while honour forbade, a direct return to England. Henry determined to march through the coast districts of Normandy, and so gain Calais. Doubtless he was encouraged to take this venturous course by his knowledge of the distracted state of France, and in particular by the fact

that, while he had now been six weeks in the country, no attempt had been made to disturb him, though there was by this time a hostile army gathering at Rouen. About October 8 the English army started, carrying with them provisions for several days, with no waggons to delay their march, and under strict orders that there should be no plundering. Henry aimed at crossing the Somme as his great-grandfather had done, by the ford of Blanchetaque below Abbeville: but on coming within a few miles he was informed that it was very strongly held by the enemy. One French writer says that this information was false, and that it was the cause of the subsequent disaster, as otherwise Henry would have reached Calais without fighting. True or false, Henry believed it, and marched up the Somme, finding bridge after bridge broken, and naturally feeling that the chance of a French army barring the road was hourly increasing. At length, on October 18, fords were found near Nesle, and the English made their way safely across. Two days later Henry received a message from the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon to the effect that they proposed to fight him before he reached Calais, and asking him to appoint a meeting-place. Henry's reply was that of a general, not of a knight-errant: he was marching straight to Calais, and they might meet him where they pleased.

The proceedings of the French as reported are somewhat difficult to interpret. We are told, and there is no reason to disbelieve it, that D'Albret, the Constable of France, had been against attempting to relieve Harfleur: the tradition of the great defeats at Crecy and Poitiers, and of the success which had attended the subsequent policy of not fighting in the open field, might well account for this. For the same reason, doubtless, the army under his command was withdrawn behind the Somme on the news of Henry's march having begun, though why the river was not better guarded it is difficult to imagine. On the other hand we are told that the king of France came to Rouen with the Dauphin, after the fall of Harfleur, and that all the chief nobility of France came thither at his summons. So numerous were their forces, and so confident were they, that they refused the offer of a contingent from the city of

Paris of 6000 men, one of them saying, "What do we want of the assistance of these shopkeepers, since we are three times as many as the English?" Most of these nobles must have marched with the Constable: it can only have been from his army that the challenge to Henry, above referred to, can possibly have been sent. Then an unintelligible story is told, of a royal council having been held at Rouen on October 20 (this date is clearly impossible), at which it was decided to fight a battle, and orders were sent accordingly to the Constable. But the same account goes on to speak of summons for all who were fit to bear arms to join the Constable's army, which from the nature of the case would have fought and (as was assumed) destroyed the English, long before any fresh troops could reinforce what was already far larger than necessary. Then follows a statement that an invitation was sent to the duke of Burgundy's son, who was only prevented from joining by his father's express orders, and that he never to his dying day forgot the humiliation of being kept away from the battle. Seeing that the youth in question was afterwards duke Philip called the Good, whose co-operation with Henry V. put France, officially speaking, into the hands of the latter, it is scarcely possible to accept this as true. Equally out of keeping with the prevalent feeling of the French at the time is the story that the king and the Dauphin wanted to join the army, and were prevented by the old duke of Berri, the king's uncle, who said, remembering Poitiers, "Better lose the battle than the king and the battle too." Why, if there was anything of an army in Normandy, and the council at Rouen were so bent on a battle, no attempt was made to harass Henry's march, when the Constable was ready to stop him in front, does not appear. From the English accounts, one of which was written by Henry's own attendant chaplain, it is perfectly certain that their march was nowhere really impeded by encountering enemies. The whole conduct of the French, alike in strategy and in the tactics of the actual battle of Agincourt, was ill judged: the explanation doubtless being that the great nobles could not be controlled effectually by the Constable.

When Henry crossed the Somme, the French army was

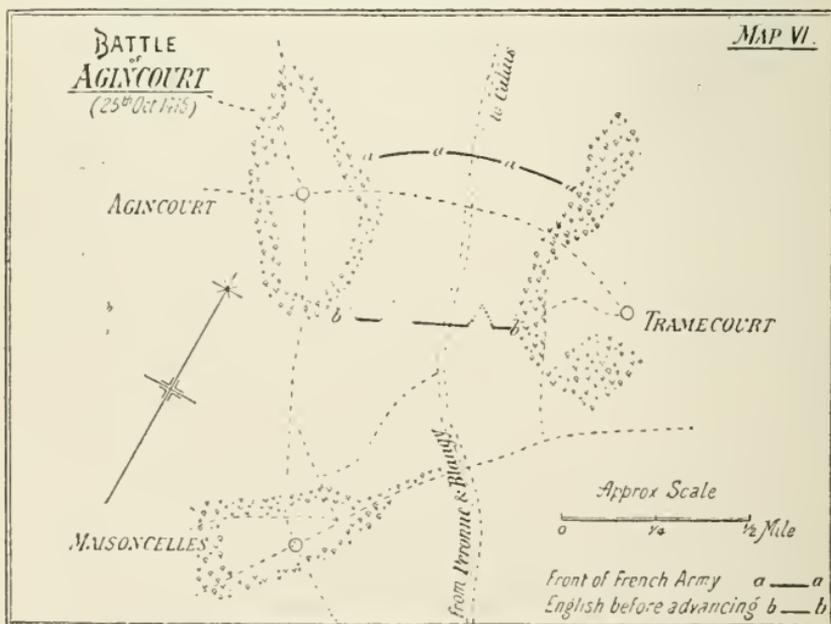
apparently at Bapaume, twenty miles to the northward. Why they made no attempt to attack the English, who marched past them in a line parallel to the river, but a few miles to the north-east of it, can hardly be conjectured. At any moment, during two or three days, the Constable might have fallen upon them, and the English if defeated must have been destroyed, for the Somme would have been at their back. Perhaps the Constable thought it wiser to let Henry go to Calais unimpeded, and only moved in deference to positive orders from the king. Whatever the reason, it was not till Henry was passing him that he moved: then he marched in the same direction, the two routes gradually converging towards each other. On October 24, just after crossing the little river Ternoise, called in the English narratives the river of swords, Henry came almost into collision with the French, whose swarming bands covered the country on his right, and almost in front. The French halted, as if to tempt him to attack. Henry knew better than so to throw away his best chance: having the advantage of the ground, he halted and formed his line for battle. The general feeling in the English army, if one may trust Henry's chaplain, was one of deep despondency. Nor was this unreasonable, seeing that they must cut their way through an army several times the size of their own, unless the enemy threw away his advantage. The king alone was cool and confident. When Sir Walter Hungerford in his hearing uttered a wish for 10,000 more archers, Henry uttered the famous rebuke which Shakespeare¹ has immortalised.

“ If we are marked to die, we are enow
 To do our country loss ; and if to live,
 The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
 God's will ! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
 By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
 Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost :

¹ *Henry V.* Act iv. Scene 3. Shakespeare has introduced the incidents told by the English authors with much accuracy, but has gone quite wrong as to the persons concerned. The wish was expressed by Sir W. Hungerford, not by the earl of Westmoreland, who was in England. Henry's chaplain makes the king's words more pious, if less poetical ; and the piety was certainly in keeping with his character.

It yearns me not if men my garments wear :
 Such outward things dwell not in my desires :
 But if it be a sin to covet honour,
 I am the most offending soul alive.
 No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England :
 God's peace ! I would not lose so great an honour
 As one man more, methinks, would share from me
 For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more !
 Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
 That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
 Let him depart ; his passport shall be made
 And crowns for convoy put into his purse :
 We would not die in that man's company
 That fears his fellowship to die with us."

The Constable, seeing that he could not attack the English to advantage, continued his march for a mile or so,



and halted across the road by which the English must march to Calais, between the little villages of Agincourt and Tramecourt, the English camping almost where they had halted to offer battle, in and about Maisoncelles.

There was much rain in the night, to the great discomfort of the English, who had little shelter, and had had more than a fortnight of continuous and fairly hard marching, with rather scanty supplies of food. The rain proved in truth a valuable ally, when the French assailed them next day over the soft wet ground.

Early on the 25th Henry arrayed his little army in order of battle. In accordance with custom, the vanguard for marching purposes formed the right of the line, the rear-guard the left: the former was commanded by the duke of York, the latter by lord Camoys, the king himself taking charge of the main body in the centre: the total number was too small to admit of a reserve. Accounts differ as to the exact formation adopted, though there is perfect unanimity as to the English men-at-arms having all dismounted, and left their horses in rear with the baggage, such as there was. Nor is there any doubt that the archers carried each man a six-foot stake, to plant in the ground in front of the line, so as to form a sort of palisade. These stakes we are expressly told had been cut by Henry's order immediately before crossing the Somme, when he knew that an attack from superior numbers was at any time possible. It seems to have been his own idea, and to have become the regular practice after Agincourt. Some writers state that the archers were entirely on the flanks, so that when the line had advanced to where it came into collision with the French, the archers lined the woods on each side of the open ground, which was crossed by the dismounted men-at-arms. This view however must be rejected for more reasons than one. The distance from the wood skirting Tramecourt on the English right to that skirting Agincourt on the left was over half-a-mile.¹ This is too great a distance to be covered by arrows from the sides, even with the long-bow at its best, and it is certain that the arrows did deadly execution all over the battle-field. Moreover Henry had at the most only 1000 men-at-arms, probably under 900. This number in single rank would hardly suffice to cover half-a-mile, and of course they could not be

¹ Comparatively recent plantations slightly obscure the ground, making minute accuracy impossible: but the general character of the field, and its main details, are quite clearly to be seen.

in single rank : there is no reason to doubt what is stated by every authority who mentions the point at all, that they were four deep. It is necessary therefore to adopt the other view, that each of the three divisions had its separate formation, dismounted men-at-arms in line in the centre, and the archers on each flank of them. The archers were formed in wedges (*cuneos*), says Henry's chaplain. The formation already described in giving account of Crecy was no doubt by this time the regularly established one for an English line : its merits were obvious, and well tested. The differences between Crecy and Agincourt were only that in the latter case the front was in three divisions instead of two, and the archers were protected by an improvised palisade, besides being separated by shorter lines of spearmen. These differences would obviously all tend to make them more destructive.

The numbers of the French army are told so variously that it is impossible to state them with any confidence. They are usually given by comparison with the English, and the proportion varies from six times as great down to three times. Henry had perhaps about 10,000 in all, as has been stated above ; he may well have had less, but cannot have had more.¹ The French were drawn up in three divisions, one behind the other, each having a continuous line of dismounted men-at-arms. One contemporary, who says that the English were four deep, says that the French were thirty deep, which may possibly have been true of the men-at-arms, who formed a much larger proportion of the French army than of the English. The front line, at any rate, cannot have had more than 600 in front at the outside, for a small body of horsemen was placed on each flank to charge the English archers, and the whole space available was but half-a-mile, though it is true that they were much crowded together. There were archers, or at any rate cross-bowmen, in the French army : how they were posted does not appear, except that they were never given a chance of

¹ The numbers of Henry's original force can be closely computed from original documents ; and there exists also part of a list of the gentlemen present at Agincourt, with the numbers of their contingents. Estimating from the latter, the total number of combatants was far below 10,000.

being useful. The knights, we are told, refused to let them have the post of honour in front, behaving thus with the usual feudal vaingloriousness, which had cost the French so dear at Crecy. Similarly we are told that the French had cannon, but certainly no use was made of them, perhaps for the same reason.

The highest nobility of France was well represented on the battle-field: in fact there were so many semi-royal personages that it was a difficult task for the Constable, whose authority they barely recognised, to distribute the honour of command so as to satisfy them. Ultimately the first division, which was to have the brunt of the fighting, and expected to carry off all the glory, comprised (it would be a farce to say it was commanded by) the Constable, the Marshal, the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, the brother of the duke of Brittany, and the count of Eu. The second division had at its head the dukes of Alençon and Bar, the count of Nevers, youngest brother of the duke of Burgundy, and the count of Vaudemont, brother of the duke of Lorraine. The rear division was under men of less note: some or all of the men-at-arms belonging to it remained on horseback. The front line of the French was drawn up a little north of the cross-road which now (and possibly then) leads from Agincourt to Tramecourt. Here they were on rising ground, and had a wider space than further to the south, the woods which bound the ground which was the actual scene of conflict trending back a little on each side. Consequently when the French advanced, the men were crowded more together. We cannot be wrong in assuming that the taking up of this position was the Constable's doing, as he had throughout been averse to attacking the English in the field: they had but to hold it, and Henry must attack, with everything against him. If the French authorities are correct, Henry so fully recognised this that he tried to negotiate, but the terms offered were such as he declined to accept. This is not improbable in itself, though the English writers do not mention it: and it is all the more likely to be true, as the battle did not begin till some three hours after sunrise.

Less than a mile separated the two armies, over ploughed land, gently rising towards the French, and soft with the

recent rain, the upper part at least doubtless already trodden into mire by the French, who had been stationary thereabouts since the previous afternoon. There was no alternative but to advance, as the French did not: but Henry possessed in his archers a means of stinging them into action, and the class pride of the French nobles had led to the adoption of an order of battle which gave them no means of replying. Towards ten o'clock the king gave the word, "In the name of Almighty God and of St. George, advance banners." For a moment the English line knelt and touched the earth with their faces: then with a cheer they moved forward. As soon as they were within bowshot of the enemy the line halted, the archers fixed their stakes in the soft ground and began to shoot. Obviously the French could not stand to be riddled with arrows: the horsemen who had been placed on the flanks of the front line on purpose to "over-ride" the archers, were ordered to charge, but were unable even to reach the English and were driven back in confusion. The Constable now led the men-at-arms forwards, separating them apparently into three masses, to attack the three lines of English spearmen. Weighted with armour, they sank to the calf at each step, and the archers took them more and more in flank as they advanced. Still they managed to reach and even to press back the English men-at-arms: but then the archers, taking to their bills, quitted the protection of the stakes, and closed on to the flanks of the helpless struggling mass, who were far too closely wedged together to use their spears. The Constable was killed: all the other noble personages figure on the list of prisoners: of one of them, the duke of Orleans, it is expressly said that he was taken out after the battle from a pile of dead and wounded; and probably the same fate befell others. Wounded or not, they could not move to escape from the ghastly heap, sunk deeper and deeper in the struggle into the miry soil. Pushing a little forward, Henry attacked the second French line, doubtless in the same manner, and with equally decisive result. The slaughter of the second division was presumably even greater, for all its leaders, with the duke of Brabant, who arrived with reinforcements during the battle, were found among the slain. Most of the third line fled without resist-

ance; the counts at its head made a last desperate charge at the head of a few hundred men, and found the death they expected.

The battle was now won, and the English had time to secure the prisoners. Suddenly a body of French fugitives who had rallied, threatened a fresh attack: how many there were is not stated, but the total number of fugitives was two or three times as great as the whole English army. It was impossible to guard the prisoners while repelling the attack, and a slaughter of them had begun, when the enemy withdrew. Of the total French loss the estimates vary greatly: the names of the most important nobles who fell have been given already. It is perhaps worth mention that the grandfathers of two of them perished at Crecy, the then count of Alençon, and the then duke of Lorraine. Between slain and prisoners, the French nobility suffered enormously; in fact the blow to the Armagnac party was for the time crushing, though it may be doubted whether the loss was not a disguised gain to France, as leaving room for the far more competent professional soldiers, who conducted the last stages of the great war.

On the English side king Henry fought like the meanest soldier, with his own hand saving the life of his young brother Humphrey. His helmet still hangs in Westminster Abbey, with more than one dent from a sword-stroke, doubtless received in the great battle. The list of English slain is preposterously small; just thirteen men-at-arms, though among them was included the duke of York, last surviving grandson of Edward III., and about a hundred others. One need realise very fully the conditions of the battle, the absurd mismanagement of the French leaders, and the helplessness of their masses, not to multiply tenfold the numbers given, which nevertheless are authentic.

An illustration of the imminence of the danger from which the English escaped, is furnished by the fact that during the action the baggage was plundered by French stragglers. As the army left Harfleur without a waggon, with nothing but what could be carried on horses or by the soldiers themselves, there cannot have been much: but the king lost some articles of plate and jewellery for his own personal use,

including the seals of his chancery, which however were most of them recovered afterwards through the instrumentality of a French noble who had been taken prisoner in Harfleur. Henry's crown he wore fixed on his helmet, and a portion of it was cut away in the battle.

Henry V. was too wise to imagine that his small force, even after victory, could achieve great things. He returned in triumph to England, leaving the French factions to tear the country to pieces. In 1417 he landed again in Normandy, and set to work systematically to conquer that province, which was left to defend itself, while the princes pursued the much more interesting employment of quarrelling with each other. After capturing Rouen, and organising the government so thoroughly that Normandy remained in English hands for thirty years, Henry marched on Paris. In face of this pressing danger the French factions began to negotiate, and an interview was arranged on the bridge of Montereau: but the Armagnacs seized the opportunity treacherously to murder the duke of Burgundy in the presence of the Dauphin. Naturally his son at once went over to Henry's side. The Dauphin was entirely in the hands of the Armagnacs, who were as incapable as they were base. In Paris, which was always inclined to the Burgundian side, the feeling spread that Henry of England, especially if he married a French princess as he proposed to do, would be better than the Dauphin. In a few months the treaty of Troyes was agreed to, by which Henry was to be regent during the lifetime of Charles VI., and succeed to the throne on his death, on condition of his marrying the princess Catharine. Unfortunately Henry died two years later, just before Charles VI. The infant Henry VI. was proclaimed king of both countries, and his uncle Bedford ruled vigorously in his name. The death of Charles VI. however made the Dauphin no longer a quasi-rebel, but the legitimate king: and the national feeling of France declared for him. Roughly speaking, the English ruled all north of the Loire, thanks to the Burgundian alliance; the south more or less ruled itself, for Charles VII. was indolent and unwarlike. His cause was not without support in the north, while his Scottish allies were there, but two bloody defeats at Crevant and Verneuil inflicted enormous loss on the

Scots. In the latter battle the archers played a very conspicuous part: we find some of the archers, left to guard the horses and baggage while the men-at-arms fought on foot, beating off unaided the body of French horse which had been sent round to attack the English rear. Though no more fighting on a large scale took place, it was not till 1428 that Bedford saw his way to the definite forward step of besieging Orleans.

This city is usually spoken of as being of paramount importance, the "key of the south"; it is assumed that its capture would have been equivalent to the final overthrow of Charles VII. A glance at the map will show that, although the possession of Orleans would have been an undoubted advantage to the English, it would have only been one step towards the conquest of the southern half of France. It might with more justice be asserted that until Orleans was taken, the English were far from secure in their hold on the north. However this may be, the siege of Orleans did in fact witness the first English failure. One of the most remarkable characters in history appeared quite suddenly on the scene, and turned the scale against them.

Orleans stands on the north bank of the Loire, with a long bridge connecting it with the south bank. At the time of the siege the inhabitants destroyed the suburb on the south bank, retaining only a fort commanding the bridge-head, called the Tournelles, which they covered with a *boulevard*.¹ The English under the earl of Salisbury began the siege on October 12, 1428. Their camp was pitched on the south of the Loire, and the first operation was to construct a little fort on the ruins of the Augustin convent, whence their cannon were directed mainly at the Tournelles. A mine was run from thence under the *boulevard* in front of the Tournelles. For some mysterious reason the English did not wait to fire the mine, but assaulted the *boulevard*, and were repulsed. This waste of life might well have been spared, for the French not only abandoned the

¹ *Boulevard* is the technical name for a kind of earthwork used in the early days of cannon. It was a sort of terrace, protected by a parapet, on which cannon could be planted as an outer defence to a fortress, and might be of any shape. The technical name for the small forts which the English gradually erected round Orleans is *bastide*.

outwork, but, the Tournelles being injured by the cannonade, evacuated that also after offering almost nominal resistance to an assault. The French broke down an arch of the bridge next to the Tournelles, and proceeded to construct a new *boulevard* on a small islet near the south bank of the Loire, over which the bridge passed. So far the siege had progressed successfully and rapidly: but on October 27 Salisbury was mortally wounded by a cannon-shot from the city, while reconnoitring from the top of the Tournelles. The death of so experienced a soldier was a great blow to the besiegers: but his successor Suffolk carried on the work with energy. Bringing the army over to the right bank, he left Sir William Glansdale in command of the Tournelles and the other forts on the left bank. His purpose was to complete the investment by a series of small forts all round the city; but the weather delayed his operations, and it was not till the end of the year that the city was actually invested. Even then it was not impossible to run the gauntlet of the forts, or to steal into the city by the river: scarcity however began to be severely felt. In February 1429 a relieving force, attempting to destroy a convoy of provisions on its way to the English camp, was totally routed on the "Day of the Herrings," so called because a large part of the provisions consisted of salt herrings (Lent was just beginning). Sir John Fastolfe, who commanded, and who had a force partly English, partly French of the Burgundian party, had time to form his waggons in square,¹ within which extemporised fort his men stood on the defensive, the English archers guarding one of the issues, the French spearmen the other. The attack was begun by a body of picked men who had come out of Orleans, and who had cannon with them. Obviously Fastolfe's defence could not long have been maintained against even the inefficient cannonading of that age: but the vanguard of the relieving army came up in time to save the day to the English. Throwing themselves from their horses, in obedience to the unreasoning super-

¹ The formation of a fortified post by means of the camp-waggons was a fundamental part of the tactics of John Zisca, the long successful leader of the Bohemian insurrection a few years earlier. The *lager* which is a feature now well known of African warfare, is the same thing in principle.

stitution which had cost the French so dear on greater fields, they rushed at Fastolfe's *lager*. The Scots were shot down by the archers, the Gascons impaled themselves on the spears: when the rout was complete, the little English army issuing from behind their waggons slaughtered as they pleased. Such a disaster was calculated to drive the men of Orleans to despair. As a last chance they offered their city to the duke of Burgundy, who naturally would much have liked such an addition to his dominions: as naturally, the English would not listen to the proposal for a moment. One of the regent's council said in the duke's presence that the English were not made to chew morsels for the duke of Burgundy to swallow. Bedford himself put the same point with less vulgarity, but equal force, saying that he was not going to beat the bushes, for some one else to catch the birds. Burgundy had no answer to make: he was not yet prepared to break with the English, though this disappointment helped no doubt to increase the growing coolness between him and Bedford. Orleans had no prospect before it but starvation or surrender, when its doom was averted by a miracle.

The deliverer who appeared at this critical moment was Jeanne d'Arc, a peasant girl from Lorraine. Her imagination had been deeply impressed by the miseries of the war: for years she had heard voices, as she called them, telling her that she was to save France, and gradually becoming more frequent and more specific in their commands. At length her profound enthusiasm made such an impression on her neighbours that she was able to make her way to the young king, to whom she announced herself as sent by God to deliver France, and conduct him to Rheims for his coronation. Charles was naturally inclined to be incredulous, but she convinced him of her good faith, and won so great an influence over courtiers and soldiers alike, as to put down for the time the prevalent profligacy and irreligion. We are told that the roughest of the French soldiers of fortune, notorious for bad language, accustomed himself, to please the Maid, to swearing only *par mon bâton*.

The immediate and pressing business was to save Orleans. Clad in armour, Jeanne accompanied a force which obeyed her inspiration, though it could hardly be said to have been

under her orders, to convey provisions from Tours. In her simple faith she wished to attack the besiegers in the most direct way; but the leaders, thinking it safer to set about their difficult task in the fashion most likely to succeed, brought her opposite Orleans on the south side of the Loire. She was indignant at the deception, but the incident only served to increase her influence. The intention was to send the provisions into Orleans by large boats, which were to be sent up the river to a convenient spot, and run the gauntlet of the besiegers back again, under cover of an attack from the relieving force. The wind however blew down stream, and the boats could not move against both wind and current. Jeanne however confidently declared that the wind would change, as it in fact did, and she herself entered Orleans. Nothing was so far gained but the immediate relief of urgent need: but in this case the first step was emphatically everything. The French were roused to confident enthusiasm by the belief that the Maid was their divinely-appointed deliverer, the English were correspondingly depressed. The consciousness of superiority, that mysterious but very real feeling which often plays a great part in war, changed sides. "Before the Maid arrived," said Dunois, one of the bravest of the French leaders, "200 English would put to flight, in a skirmish, 800 or 1000 of the king's army: after she came, 200 French engaged all the strength of the English, and forced them to shut themselves up in their forts." This was an exaggeration, but no more. One by one the English *bastides* were assailed, and fell into the hands of the French. Sometimes the defence was but feeble, sometimes it was for the time successful. The truth was that the English superiority was due to their tactics in the field, for which there was obviously no place in the attack and defence of fortifications, not to greater courage, except so far as repeated defeats had cowed the French and led them to expect failure. Jeanne d'Arc had changed all that: her own perfect courage, and calm conviction that she was under the guidance of Heaven, roused her excitable countrymen to irresistible enthusiasm. At length came the turn of the Tournelles: the relieving army, with the Maid at their head, assaulted the *boulevard* which protected the little fort on the south. The English

defended themselves deperately, and for three hours kept the enemy at bay. Jeanne was wounded by an arrow, and this caused such general discouragement that the leaders of the French were on the point of retreating. The Maid herself however had not lost heart; "See," she cried suddenly, "my banner touches the wall, the place is yours," and returned to the assault. Roused to madness by her example, the French renewed the conflict, some of them shouting that they could see St. Michael in the air beckoning them on, others that they saw the white dove of the Holy Spirit alight on the Maid's standard. Some of the garrison of Orleans pushed planks across the broken arch of the bridge, and took the Tournelles in rear. The *boulevard* was carried, and as Glandsdale the commander was retiring into the Tournelles, a cannon-ball broke the bridge of communication, and he was drowned in the ditch. With his death all resistance ceased: the relics of the garrison of the Tournelles were taken prisoners. The besiegers, seeing that the game was finally lost, abandoned the siege.

Apart from the personal interest awakened by the first exploits of Jeanne d'Arc, who is a character unique in history, the siege of Orleans has some military interest. In it we see the mediæval and the modern¹ conditions of a siege more or less combined. Cannon are employed on both sides, and at first with some effect; the English capture of the Tournelles is due to the damage done by their fire: Salisbury could have been killed from the town by no other means. The *bastides* erected by the besiegers are in mediæval style, belonging to a state of things when walled towns had to be starved out: it does not seem to have been regarded as possible to batter Orleans itself. The *boulevard* of the Tournelles on the other hand is modern, an outwork formed expressly for the use of cannon. The hand-to-hand fighting of the assaults is of all ages, down to very recent times. Whether, in face of all the engines of destruction that can now be brought into play, a storm like that of the

¹ This is of course not the first instance of a siege approximating to the modern type. The siege of Harfleur already mentioned was in fact more like a modern siege than that of Orleans.

Tournelles, or even like that of Badajos, will ever be possible again, is another question.

The failure of the siege of Orleans marks the beginning of the decline of English power in France. Jeanne d'Arc is reasonably called a saint and a heroine: her career, brief and ultimately disastrous as it was, had a great immediate effect in stimulating French patriotism generally, and especially in rousing Charles VII. to a sense of his duty. But it is entirely a mistake to rank her first and greatest exploit as an event of supreme importance.¹ One may see any day on the sea-shore the tide at its height lapping round the base of a bit of rock which it never entirely covers: but one does not therefore suppose that the rock caused the turn of the tide. The nominal submission of France to Henry V. at the treaty of Troyes had been due to France being divided against herself, to one party being so bitter against the other as to be willing to league with the foreigner. The superiority of Henry, and of his brother the regent Bedford, to any of their immediate opponents, was most marked; the excellence of the English soldiers and tactics gave them every advantage. Yet even so they could not conquer France. Such a state of things could not last; competent soldiers, rulers who were not slaves of faction, were sure to emerge sooner or later. The duke of Burgundy had only to change sides, which as a matter of fact he did out of personal grudge against Bedford, to weight the scale heavily. The ultimate failure of the English attempt to conquer France was inevitable: whether the process of expelling them should be long or short must needs depend on the amount of capacity shown on each side.

The superstitious awe inspired by Jeanne d'Arc did not last long; in that age all the world was ready to believe in her having supernatural powers, but these might as easily be diabolical as divine. Naturally the French regarded her at first as divinely inspired; and her piety, honesty, and perfect simplicity, which were conspicuous to them, might well have roused a more lasting enthusiasm. The English as naturally regarded her as a witch, and put her to a cruel

¹ Sir Edward Creasy goes so far as to place the relief of Orleans among the fifteen *Decisive Battles of the World*.

death as such when she fell into their hands. The victory of Patay, won by the French during the period of her influence, was due mainly to the English commander being attacked before he had time to form his line, though to Jeanne may doubtless be ascribed the unusual promptness of the French in attacking. The Maid fulfilled her word, and had Charles VII. crowned in Rheims: but otherwise the war dragged on indecisively till the regent Bedford died, just when the duke of Burgundy had found it worth his while to go over to the French side. Thenceforward the English had no competent head in France: the government at home was weak and torn by dissensions, which led to the claims of the duke of York. Nevertheless the war lasted nearly twenty years longer, steadily tending in one direction, but marked by only one notable event. This was the battle of Formigny in 1451, which was the final blow to the English power in Normandy. Formigny was lost because the English leaders applied the tactics which had won Crecy and Agincourt under conditions to which they were not applicable. They took up a defensive position, and stood to await attack, when their business was to force their way onwards. The French had a couple of cannon, and the English broke their lines to try and seize them. They nearly succeeded, but the result was that the two armies engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict, in which the archers could not use their bows. Another French force coming up and falling on the rear of the English completed their destruction: of the 5000 men engaged, 3700 were counted dead on the field.

That England gained anything by the Hundred Years' War, except military repute, no one would dream of affirming: even that was evanescent, for gunpowder presently drove the bow out of use. France gained, at a frightful cost of suffering, her national coherence, but she gained it in the disastrous form of a monarchy virtually absolute. The war almost destroyed the feudal nobility, and left nothing strong but the crown. What might have been the history of France if she had not gone through this fiery trial, if the nobles had remained petty princes as in Germany, can hardly be conjectured; the Hundred Years' War fixed the destiny of France for her. The political lessons of the war are glaringly obvious. A nation in the modern sense is

indefinitely stronger than a feudal kingdom : conquest of a people that chooses to resist persistently and with judgment is impossible. The military lessons are equally clear : discipline will counterbalance almost any odds : the chief means of tactical success lies in the skilful combination of different arms.

CHAPTER VII

THE WARS OF THE ROSES

THE Wars of the Roses were in more ways than one the outcome of the great French war. Formally they were an appeal to arms to decide a disputed succession to the crown: substantially they were a revolt against a weak and discredited government, of whose incompetence the unsuccessful conduct of the war in France had been the most conspicuous evidence. Henry VI., or those who bore rule in his name, had neither the sagacity to make peace and save some portion of the French territory at the price of abandoning claim to the whole, nor the energy to carry on the conflict vigorously. The absurdly scanty numbers of the English troops in France during the last fifteen or twenty years of the war testify alike to the feebleness of the government at home, and to the respect which English military skill and prowess inspired abroad. The marriage of Henry VI. was arranged in the hope of propping up his failing cause in France. And the personality of Margaret of Anjou is on the whole the most important in the Wars of the Roses. On the one hand her energy and daring alone sustained the cause of Lancaster, which without her would have collapsed; on the other hand her extreme unpopularity helped the cause of York. The accident that she was eight years a wife before becoming a mother contributed to the same end. The duke of York had so long been in the position of next in succession to the crown,¹ that when a direct heir was born

¹ The Beauforts had been duly legitimated by Parliament, but Henry IV., in confirming this to his half-brothers, had inserted words in his charter which barred their succession to the throne. The strict legality of the latter act can hardly be maintained: but it is plain that no one dreamed of preferring the Beauforts to the house of York.

to Henry VI. the disappointed partisans of York began to say that in strict hereditary right he ought to take precedence of the boy. They could not bear to see the predominance of the hated French queen assured, and her offspring barring for ever the hopes of their leader and themselves. This was perfectly natural under the circumstances, but it does not therefore follow that the claim of York was sound. Those disaffected to an actual king naturally look for a rival claimant, the support of whom may serve to disguise rebellion. There can be no doubt that, on the principles of succession now legally established, the next heir to Richard II. was the young earl of March, or that his claim passed eventually to the duke of York. On the other hand it is equally certain that in the fifteenth century there was no established law of succession, and that the substitution of Henry of Lancaster for his cousin was in accordance with the traditional rule of election. If Henry V. had lived to old age, nothing would ever have been heard of the pretensions of the house of York. Those pretensions were in accordance with the legitimist ideas which were then gaining ground elsewhere, as the natural corollary of absolutism, but which have never been really accepted in England except by Jacobite fanatics.

When the war at length broke out, ample material for the armies was supplied by the soldiers whose occupation in France was gone, by the overplus of a population not industrially prospering, and most of all by the personal following of the nobles. Though on the whole the cause of York was favoured by the towns, by the merchants, by the most prosperous and civilised elements of the nation, while the backward regions of the north and west supported Lancaster, yet the differences were not deep enough to affect the conduct of the war. Both sides were equipped and fought after the same fashion; both used cannon more or less; both knew the deadly effect of the cloth-yard arrow, and therefore sought to come to close quarters; both fought with the obstinacy of their race, and often with the special fury which civil war is apt to engender. Hence there is much similarity between the battles, and not much interest, in spite of the remarkable vicissitudes of fortune, except in the three great battles won by Edward IV. in person. To

what extent Edward deserves the credit of Towton, the first and greatest of them, cannot be determined; he had the co-operation of the earl of Warwick, and he was still very young. Barnet and Tewkesbury were clearly his own.

Late in 1460, as the result of a Yorkist victory at Northampton, a compromise was arranged by which Henry VI. was to retain the crown for his life, and Richard duke of York was recognised as his successor. Queen Margaret, however, would not surrender the rights of her son without a struggle: the nobles of the north rose in arms again, and the duke of York was obliged to march against them. On December 30 he was defeated and slain at Wakefield; his second son, and his brother-in-law the earl of Salisbury, Warwick's father, perished with him. The victory cost the Lancastrians dear: the barbarity of decapitating York's dead body, and placing the head, crowned in mockery with a paper diadem, over the gate of York, strengthened the feeling of hatred and contempt for the north-countrymen, as little better than savages, already growing in the south. Moreover, York, who had displayed no particular capacity, was replaced by his son Edward, who, with all his faults, proved the best soldier of the war. Warwick also, who was an abler man than his father, and who already held the great inheritance of the Beauchamps through marriage with the heiress, succeeded to his father's wide domains, and so concentrated in his own hands by far the greatest independent power ever possessed by an English subject. Margaret advanced southwards, won a battle at St. Albans, but found London unassailable, and was obliged to return to Yorkshire, her soldiers plundering and destroying on the way in a manner ruinous to her cause. Meanwhile the young duke of York, after crushing the Lancastrians of the Welsh border at Mortimer's Cross, had reached London, and had been proclaimed king as Edward IV. Without delay he and Warwick marched northwards to bring the contest to a decisive issue, and fought on Palm Sunday 1461 the greatest battle, in respect of the numbers engaged, ever fought on English soil.¹

¹ In Chapter II. I abstained from giving the numbers at Hastings, because there seem to me to be no adequate materials for forming a trustworthy estimate: but it is scarcely possible that the armies

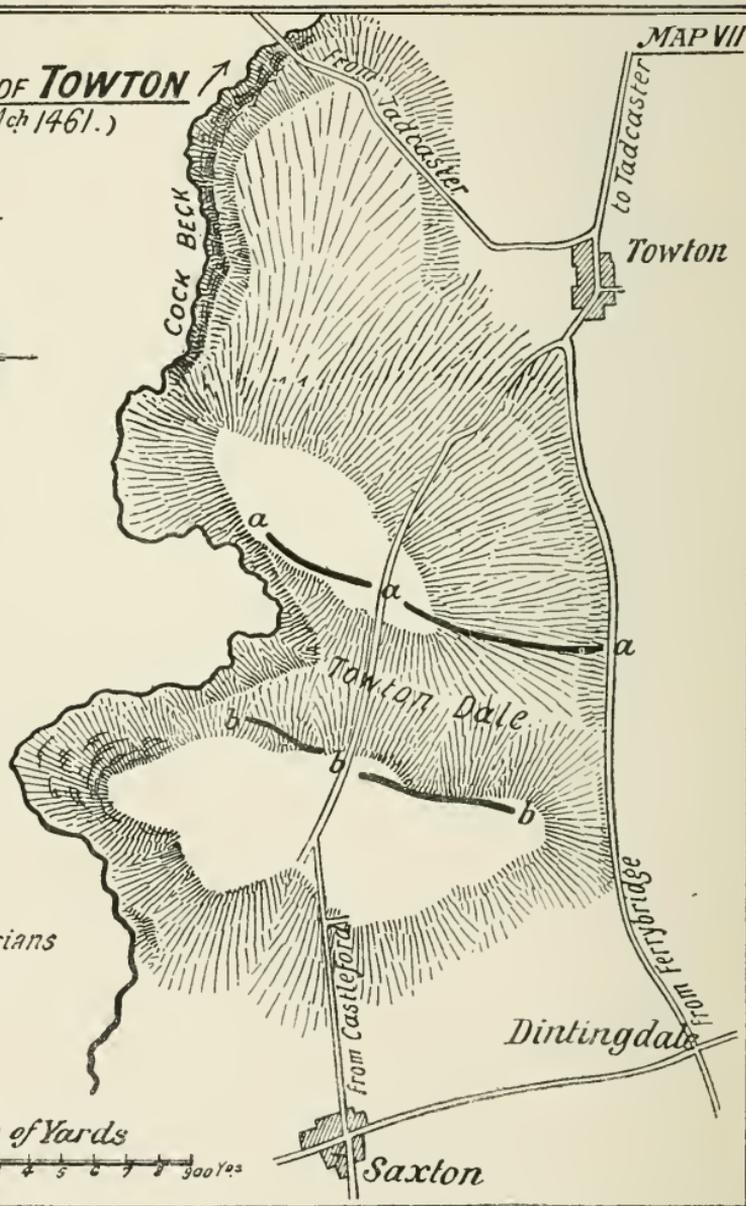
The great north road, dating back to Roman times, crosses the river Aire at Ferrybridge, and the Wharfe at Tadcaster, twelve or thirteen miles further north, and nine miles from York. The Lancastrians intended to defend the passage of the Aire, and encamped near Towton, between the two rivers, but fully nine miles from the Aire. They were apparently in complete ignorance of the rapid advance of the Yorkists, who seized the important bridge unopposed. Somerset, who commanded the Lancastrian army, if any one can be said to have had supreme command, sent forward Lord Clifford to attempt to regain Ferrybridge. The Yorkists still more inexcusably were in their turn surprised and cut to pieces. Again Somerset blundered, and left Clifford unsupported. The Yorkist vanguard, under Lord Falconbridge, was sent up the Aire, and crossed it unopposed by the ford, difficult and dangerous in spring when the rivers are full, three miles up at Castleford. Clifford, in danger of being cut off, retreated on the main army, the enemy making no attempt to pursue him: but within little more than a mile of the camp his force was surprised and annihilated by Falconbridge. When we remember that English armies had been fighting in France down to 1453, under conditions which ought to have developed the utmost care in never neglecting a precaution or an opportunity, and that they had been fighting at home almost ever since, it seems scarcely credible that such a series of astonishing blunders should have been committed by both sides.

The Yorkists, marching by the two roads from Ferrybridge and Castleford, which unite at the village of Towton, halted on the evening of Saturday March 28, a couple of miles from the Lancastrian position. The one thing which every Englishman who pretended to be a general in that age understood, was how to take up a position tactically strong for standing on the defensive. Somerset's army was however far too large for his capacity: he drew up his 60,000 men on a front of a mile, thereby throwing away his advantage in numbers. For a third of his force, awaiting

which fought at Hastings can have been within many thousands of the total given by chroniclers for Towton.

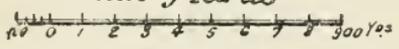
BATTLE OF TOWTON

(29th Mch 1461.)



a - Lancastrians
b - Yorkists

Scale of Yards



an attack from a fairly equal enemy, the position would have been excellently chosen, assuming that he was not going to be forced to retreat. The Lancastrian army was posted facing south on a plateau, their right resting on a little stream, the Cock, which in summer is a mere thread of water, but was at that season in flood, and quite impassable. In rear of their left was Towton village, to which the great road ran at the bottom of a tolerably steep slope of from 50 to 80 feet from the edge of the plateau: the slope down to the Cock on the other flank was impracticably steep. In front was a slight depression known as Towton Dale, from which the ground rose again on the south to a similar plateau. Thus the right was perfectly secure; if the enemy attempted to turn the left they would have to attack up a steep ascent: even in front they would have the ground against them. Somerset had only to place some of the useless thousands that overcrowded his line of battle in observation on the plain east of the high-road, ready to strike at the enemy's flank, and he could hardly have been assailed successfully. The weak point of the position was that the Cock bends round the rear of it, a serious obstacle in its flooded state to retreat in case of need, the more so as the old road from Towton descended very steeply to the only bridge. The country being at that date all open, retreat was possible north-eastwards, in rear of the left, without crossing the Cock, more or less in the direction of the modern road, which only crosses the Cock close to its junction with the Wharfe, very near Tadcaster. Obviously, however, should the enemy turn or defeat the left of the army, this resource would be cut off, and defeat would mean destruction.

Warwick and Edward advanced at dawn on the Sunday morning, though their rearguard, under the duke of Norfolk, delayed by the crossing of the Aire, was still some miles off. Their numbers, though far inferior to those of the enemy,¹ were amply sufficient for covering a front of a mile.

¹ It is possible that the numbers are exaggerated, but there is no reason for thinking so except the smallness of the battle-field; and if so the exaggeration was on both sides alike, for it is certain that the Lancastrian numbers preponderated. The Yorkist force is given at 49,000 by the authorities who put the Lancastrians at 60,000, both

The Lancastrians, having chosen their ground, naturally did not oppose the Yorkists' advance. The latter climbed the southern slope, and marched across the plateau, a fall of snow preventing either party seeing the other until they faced each other at a distance of a quarter of a mile across Towton Dale. From this time, if not before, the snow was driving in the faces of the Lancastrians, and Falconbridge utilised this advantage very cleverly. He ordered his archers to advance and begin shooting at the enemy, whom they could dimly see: as soon as the Lancastrians, annoyed by the arrows which they could not see coming, began to reply, he withdrew his men a short distance, and let the enemy waste their shafts on the open ground. Presently the hail of Lancastrian arrows slackened, as the supply ran short, and Falconbridge once more sent his archers forward, and so galled the defenceless enemy that they advanced to come to close quarters. The Lancastrians had thus to attack up-hill through the blinding snow, instead of compelling their antagonists to assail them at a disadvantage. A hand-to-hand conflict all along the line followed. Both sides fought stubbornly: orders had been given on both sides, so the chronicler says, to give no quarter. How long this continued it is hard to say: the armies may very well have been face to face by seven in the morning, though one account names nine o'clock. The losses on the victorious side, enormous for a hand-to-hand battle, in which the front lines only can fall, prove that it must have lasted a long while. About noon Norfolk, coming up at length from Ferrybridge by the great road, took the Lancastrians in flank. Still it was only gradually that they gave way: the battle had lasted for ten hours before the Lancastrians finally broke and fled by the only way open to them, towards the narrow bridge over the Cock. The swollen stream was scarcely fordable, the bridge was soon blocked, thousands were trampled down in the water, till the latest fugitives escaped over a causeway

totals being given before any fighting had taken place. What losses had been incurred at Ferrybridge we are not told, and we can only guess at the strength of the Yorkist rearguard: but the numbers with which the battle began cannot have been very far from seven to four.

of their comrades' bodies. In modern times many thousands of the defeated army would have been taken prisoners, as happened at Blenheim when Marlborough pinned the French right against the Danube. The fury of civil war in the fifteenth century allowed very few prisoners to be made. Over 30,000 corpses are said to have been buried near Towton, of whom about a quarter were Yorkists. How many more found their last resting-place in the river cannot be guessed; all we know is that the Lancastrian army was to all intents and purposes annihilated.

After the battle of Towton the Lancastrians would never again have been able to shake Edward's throne, had he continued on good terms with his great supporter Warwick. It would be irrelevant to discuss the causes of the quarrel between them: it suffices to say that the breach ultimately became irreparable, and that Warwick determined to restore Henry VI. Before the vast power of the house of Neville, in alliance with the Lancastrian party, and strengthened by others whom Edward's conduct had offended, the king was helpless, and fled the country without striking a blow. For some months Warwick reigned in the name of the imbecile Henry VI.; but in March 1471 Edward was enabled by his brother-in-law, the duke of Burgundy, to land with a small force at the mouth of the Humber. He deliberately perjured himself by solemnly swearing in York Minster that he would never again claim the crown, and that he only came to claim his ancestral lands, and then marched southwards to try his luck. He conducted his enterprise with great skill and audacity, but his enemies also played completely into his hands. Northumberland, perhaps out of jealousy of the Nevilles, made no attempt to move southwards with the forces he raised in the extreme north. Montagu, Warwick's brother, who held Pontefract, apparently did not deem himself strong enough to attack Edward without Northumberland's co-operation. The earl of Oxford moved from the eastern counties upon Newark, but shrunk back in alarm when Edward turned to attack him. Somerset was far away in the south-west. Warwick was doing his best to gather an army in the midlands, and was at Coventry when Edward, who had by this time accumulated a respectable army, moved from Leicester. As he

knew that Montagu was following Edward from the north, and Oxford threatening him from the east, as he was every day expecting his son-in-law the duke of Clarence to join him from the west, Warwick chose to play a cautious game, and let Edward pass Coventry without fighting. The next news that Warwick heard was that Clarence had joined Edward: without principle to keep him true to any cause, without judgment to discern his own best interest, Clarence was always ready to plunge into a new treason. Edward now deemed himself strong enough to march on London, where his cause had always been popular, and on April 11 took possession of the capital without a blow. Hearing that Warwick was approaching, he moved out on the 13th to meet him, and on that night the two armies bivouacked opposite each other north of the little town of Barnet. Warwick had been joined not only by Montagu and Oxford, but also by Somerset: Edward had drawn considerable reinforcements from Essex. Of the numbers on each side very conflicting accounts are given, but from the narrative of the battle it would seem that there was no very great disparity, though probably Warwick had some little superiority; neither side can well have had 20,000 men, possibly much less.

The contemporary narratives are not more valuable than most mediæval chronicles in determining topography with precision, and the battle-field of Barnet has now been so much enclosed and built over that little can be discovered from examination of the ground. In the fifteenth century Gladsmuir Heath, as it was then called, was open ground, as the name implies: nor is there any trace in the narratives of the battle having extended over the rough broken ground which lies east of the great north road towards Monk's Hadley. The only topographical point made in the official Yorkist narrative is that Warwick, who was first on the field, arranged his men more than half-a-mile north of Barnet "under an hedge-side." There can nowhere have been a great length of hedge, sufficient to protect even a large part of Warwick's front; but he may well have taken up a line of which the southern boundary of Wrotham Park would form nearly the centre.¹ Nothing however turns on

¹ Sir John Ramsay, in his generally valuable work, *Lancaster and*

the exact shape of the ground: the battle was, like most others of the age, a straightforward engagement all along the line. Edward was anxious to make sure of fighting on the morrow: he had nothing to gain by delay, and might lose much, for Lancastrian forces were gathering in Kent. He therefore under cover of the darkness moved up so near to Warwick's line, that it would be impossible for either party to retire without engaging. So near did he venture that Warwick's guns, which were kept firing during the night, sent their shot harmlessly over the heads of the Yorkists. When day dawned on Easter Sunday, April 14, Gladsmuir Heath was enveloped in so thick a mist that neither party discovered at first that each army outflanked the other on the right.¹ The battle began in the usual way with an ineffective cannonade and some flights of arrows, and then they came to close quarters. As might be expected, Montagu and Oxford on the Lancastrian right defeated Edward's left, which fled through Barnet, pursued by Oxford, though Montagu seems not to have quitted the line of battle. In the centre the king in person engaged in an obstinate struggle with Somerset, and slowly gained some advantage. Warwick on the left was partially outflanked by Gloucester, but held his ground fairly well, though he was gradually forced back on the centre. In the thick fog nothing could be seen a few hundred yards off: thus Warwick remained ignorant of the success of Oxford, who, in his turn, was so completely bewildered by the fog that when he turned back, after driving his own immediate opponents through Barnet, he lost his way completely, and instead of taking Edward in rear as he presumably aimed at doing, went past the contending lines, and came upon the reserve

York, places Warwick's line along the high-road, where there is every reason to believe that there was no hedge at all in the fifteenth century, for the amazing reason that "from that position he could take the king's troops in detail as they came out of the narrow street of Barnet," which ended in the open heath half-a-mile off. It is true that he adds, "but Edward always laughed at Warwick's strategy," by which presumably he means tactics. Since all that Edward knew of Warwick's tactics was that he had inspired, or at least shared in directing, the bold and skilful tactics of Towton, he must have been very easily amused.

¹ This fact alone is sufficient to disprove the Yorkist falsehood that while Warwick had 30,000 men, Edward had but 9000.

of his own side. Here occurred the fatal mistake which ruined Warwick's chance of victory. In the mist the silver star of the De Veres was mistaken for Edward's cognizance, a sun with rays: Oxford's men were received with a volley of arrows. Instantly the notion of treachery arose: the jealousy between the old Lancastrians and Warwick's supporters blazed out. Oxford fled at once: Somerset followed his example. Some of the old Lancastrians turned their arms against the Nevilles, and Montagu, it would seem, was killed by his own friends. Warwick saw that all was lost: but in determining to fight on foot, in his heavy armour, he had made flight impossible, and he was beaten down and killed, apparently unrecognised. When Edward saw that the victory was gained, his one anxiety was to know whether Warwick had fallen. The corpses of Warwick and Montagu were found, and exposed for three days in St. Paul's Cathedral, in order that there might be no doubt about the great earl being really dead. Edward was quite right: the cause of Henry VI. was bound up with Warwick's life. Unlike as Warwick was in personal character to the typical feudal noble, he was in a very real sense "the last of the Barons." The quasi-despotic monarchy of the Tudors and Stuarts was founded on the field of Barnet.

On the day of the battle of Barnet, queen Margaret with her son landed at Weymouth. She soon learned the fatal news, and was joined by Somerset and other fugitives. The Beauforts and Courtenays, strong in their hereditary influence in the west, were far from believing that their cause was ruined: and the fact that Edward waited at Windsor till he was sure that they were not moving eastwards towards London, implies that he at least thought them not too weak to attempt it. The ultimate and undoubtedly more prudent resolution of the Lancastrian leaders was to make for Gloucester, and form a junction with the earl of Pembroke, who was raising forces in Wales; but their purpose was not certainly apparent until they left Bath, and instead of seeking battle with the king, who was by this time at Cirencester, moved on Bristol. Still it was not quite certain that they were avoiding battle. On May 2, Edward, who was well served by his scouts, was informed that the enemy were in position at Sodbury, some dozen

miles north of Bristol. He hastily moved towards them, but on reaching Sodbury towards evening found no trace of the enemy. The Lancastrians marched all night, and on the forenoon of May 3 approached Gloucester, hoping to occupy the town and there cross the Severn. The governor of Gloucester was however a Yorkist, and refused them admission, and the wearied Lancastrians had to continue their march, for they knew that Edward was not far off. There was no bridge over the Severn nearer than Worcester: but if the Avon could be crossed at Tewkesbury they might hope to reach Worcester unattacked, or even to pass the Severn by boats at some nearer point. Accordingly they struggled on ten miles further to Tewkesbury, and there halted for the night, utterly overcome by fatigue, after marching forty-four miles since the preceding morning. All day Edward had been marching along the Cotswolds on a line parallel to that followed by the Lancastrians, but some distance in rear, though gradually gaining on them. Towards evening, in passing through Cheltenham, he heard positively that the enemy were in Tewkesbury; and he also halted for the night about three miles off.

The author of the *Arrivall of King Edward*, who obviously accompanied his master to Tewkesbury, takes great pains to describe what he saw. Like many other writers, he has no names but "hill" and "valley" for trifling inequalities of ground, but otherwise he writes with unusual precision, and there is no reason whatever for distrusting his authority. The Lancaster position, he says, was "in a close, even at the towne's end, the towne and abbey at their backs, afore them, and upon every hand of them, fowle lanes and depe dikes with hills and valleys, a ryght evill place to approche." Their leaders doubtless deemed it impossible to escape across the Avon without fighting, and as they were certainly not seriously outmatched in numbers,¹ they had no reason to avoid a battle. As usual in that age they took up a position well chosen for fighting on the defensive; but it had a muddy brook between them and Tewkesbury, and the Avon beyond the town, so that defeat

¹ The numbers are not very clearly given, but the accounts seem to indicate no great disparity, with the advantage, if any, to the Lancastrians.

involved total destruction. Sir John Ramsay¹ gives a very good map, which shows all the ancient lanes, as well as the modern road and other things which have materially altered the ground. It is of course impossible to discover exactly which enclosures are ancient, and there are now no "depe dikes." The small numbers engaged could not have covered nearly the length of front possible according to the topography; but the left flank must have been near the easternmost of the ancient lanes, for the author of the *Arrivall* speaks of Somerset having "passyd a lane" in his attempted turning movement in the battle, which can have been no other. Whatever the exact position of the Lancastrian line, king Edward brought his own troops up opposite to them, except that he posted two hundred spears "near a quarter of a myle from the fielde," to watch a wood by means of which he thought his right flank might be threatened. The battle began with some cannonading and "shott of arrows," in both of which the Yorkists had rather the advantage. The position was however very difficult to assail at close quarters, and the Lancastrians might apparently have held it successfully, had not Somerset attempted a counter-stroke. He, we are told, "somewhat asydehand the king's vaward, and by certain paths and ways therefore afore purveyed, and to the king's party unknown, departed out of the fielde, passyd a lane, and came into a faire place or close even afore the king where he was embattailed, and from the hill that was in that one of the closes, he set right fiercely upon the end of the king's battaile." There must have been a gap between the king's division in the centre and the vaward, or right, for this to be possible. However the centre and right united in pushing back this attack, and the two hundred spears above-mentioned, falling unexpectedly on Somerset's flank, completed his defeat. The king was then able to advance, attack in flank the Lancastrian centre, and so rout the whole army, which broke and fled in all directions. The

¹ Sir John Ramsay must have seen the ground in winter, if he was able to obtain a view of the whole position. In summer the trees, which are none of them ancient, intercept a great deal. I should be inclined to think that the Lancastrian line faced nearly south instead of parallel to the modern road, as he places it: otherwise he seems to me to have worked out the topographical details very well.

only local name that survives as a memorial of the battle is the "Bloody Meadow" by the Avon below Tewkesbury: this may well mark a place where many fugitives of the right wing, cut off from the only escape into the town, were slaughtered by the victors. Prince Edward, the last heir of Lancaster, was killed in the battle or the pursuit—there seems no foundation for the story which Shakespeare used, that he was taken prisoner and killed in cold blood. Somerset, Devon, nearly all the remaining Lancastrians of note were killed, or were executed after the battle. Except for the Tudor interest in Wales, the Lancastrian party was annihilated. It required the early death of Edward IV., and the murder of his nephews by Richard of Gloucester, before Henry of Richmond could resuscitate it.

INTERMEDIATE NOTE

GUNPOWDER

The invention of gunpowder was slower in making itself felt than most of the other great discoveries which have turned the course of history. There is no intrinsic impossibility in the statement of a contemporary Italian writer, that Edward III. had cannon at Crecy, though in the absence of any other testimony it is not generally believed. He had them at the siege of Calais immediately afterwards, though they were of little use. The earliest firearms were of very clumsy make, slow and difficult to load, short in range and allowing no accuracy of aim. From the nature of the case, cannon¹ were made practically useful earlier than hand weapons. As soon as ever gun-carriages of a tolerably movable form were devised, it was

¹ Curiously enough the earliest cannon seem to have been breech-loading. This mode of construction was however abandoned after a time, either because the movable pieces did not fit properly, or because they could not be made strong enough to stand the strain when gunpowder came to be thoroughly explosive, in favour of muzzle-loading. In modern warfare, until after the Crimean War, cannon were mere metal tubes, with a touch-hole by which they were fired. Things have moved fast since then. Of the millions of men now under military service, how many have a clear idea of what "spiking a gun" meant?

possible at least to use them on the battle-field, though a very long time had still to elapse before they became important ; in the battles of the English civil war of the seventeenth century artillery plays a very minor part. Naturally they were much more effective in sieges, where mobility was not required, and the slowness of fire less important. By the end of the fifteenth century, if not sooner, it was perceived that gunpowder had effected a revolution in this branch of warfare. In the early middle ages a well-walled town or castle was proof against such modes of battering as were then in use. Unless escalading proved possible, the besiegers could only reduce the place by starvation. With that inevitable reservation the defence was stronger than the attack. Hence a feudal noble, possessed of a well-situated castle, could defy the crown, for a time at least ; hence in Italy the cities could make themselves independent. With the introduction of cannon all this was changed. The crown, and as a rule the crown only, could afford to maintain artillery that could be used against a fortified city or castle, and with its aid could reduce with certainty every place which had walls of the mediæval type. To fortify in a fashion that would give a reasonable chance against cannon was out of the power of most nobles. Thus artillery contributed largely, perhaps more than any other single agency, to the great political change which marks the close of the middle ages, by which the crown becomes, at least as against the nobles, virtually absolute.

Firearms to be used by hand were far slower in their development, as was natural, owing to their greater complication. The earliest were mere tubes, elevated on a stand, miniature cannon in fact. For a very long while they could not be fired from the shoulder, but required to be supported on iron rests fixed into the ground, which added seriously to the weight to be carried. Musketeers, if one may apply the term to the soldiers who bore the earlier firearms before the musket properly so called was invented, were quite incapable of standing alone. They might fire one volley at charging cavalry, but long before they could be ready for a second, the horsemen would be cutting down their defenceless ranks. Hence pikemen, who should do the defensive part of the work, were a necessary adjunct to musketeers : obviously also the pikemen alone could come to close quarters in attacking. It was not until the invention of the bayonet enabled the musketeer to be, so to speak, his own pikeman, that infantry equipped with firearms could become the real backbone of an army.

It is doubtful whether a musket bullet¹ was ever so deadly a

¹ I use this phrase for convenience' sake, to mean the shot discharged by every kind of hand firearms until the introduction of the rifle.

missile as the clothyard arrow, all points taken into account. If a bullet struck armour obliquely, it would penetrate, instead of glancing, at a greater angle than an arrow point.¹ And it would also be likely to make worse wounds, by driving in bits of the metal. On the other hand the arrow was noiseless and smokeless, merits which are reckoned important by modern authorities who are seeking after smokeless powder. It had greater range than the musket bullet, admitted of much greater accuracy of aim, and had probably at least equal direct penetrating power, except at very short distances. England however was the only country in the latter middle ages which used a missile weapon that would bear comparison even with the clumsiest firearms. Naturally musketeers, with their pikemen, were developed rather on the continent than in England, though everywhere the development was slow, and the process of superseding armour and hand-to-hand weapons very gradual.

The ultimate political tendency of the invention of gunpowder was obvious. By rendering discipline more necessary for the efficiency of the soldier, it threw power into the hands of the state, which alone could maintain and organise bodies of trained men, as against individuals. By making infantry the one indispensable arm, it tended to make oppression less easy: the class which furnishes the fighting strength of a nation will in the long run have at least its full share of political power. It may be only a coincidence, but it is at any rate symbolical, that England, the country in which, thanks to the long-bow, infantry became earliest of paramount importance in war, is also the country in which aristocratic privileges in the strict sense of the word, as distinguished from aristocratic influences, were of least extent and soonest reduced to insignificance. It is also the country in which the nation as a whole earliest felt its strength, and taught its kings to respect the national will.

¹ This especially held good of the heavy plate armour which was introduced in the fourteenth century, and grew heavier and heavier. There seems to have been hardly any chain mail which a clothyard arrow could not pierce.

CHAPTER VIII

FLODDEN

THE establishment of Scottish independence, in the teeth of English claims to supremacy, not unnaturally led to a feeling of opposition to England, and of consequent alliance with France, which on the whole worked disastrously for Scotland. Unfortunately also the policy of hostility gradually developed in the smaller people a feeling of bitter animosity towards their neighbours, which the English on their side hardly felt. On the borders mutual injuries stimulated personal hatred, but only rarely affected the relations of the two states. The English government had no motive for hostility to Scotland, no passion to indulge: it would at any time have been glad of firm peace with Scotland, but was apt to try to secure this by establishing its influence over Scotland, rather than by relations of equal friendliness. While the long contest with France lasted, England had obviously every motive for desiring to be free of a troublesome enemy in the north: but Scotland was ever hostile. Sometimes a Scottish army invaded England more or less in concert with the French, as when Nevil's Cross followed hard upon Crecy. Later, Scottish nobles and soldiers swarmed in the French armies: the defeat of Verneuil was a heavier blow to Scotland than to France.

Unfortunately for the success of the Scots in their many encounters with the English, Bannockburn had been too great a victory. The spearmen had on that day so decisively defeated the English mailed horsemen that the Scots seem always to have assumed that nothing could be more effective. Time after time the English archers inflicted crushing losses on the Scottish armies. Halidon Hill (1333), Nevil's Cross

(1346), Homildon (1402) are the chief instances, but not the only ones, before the day of Flodden, the last great victory of the bow, and perhaps the most overwhelming defeat which a kingdom ever suffered.

From the accession of the house of Tudor, the English policy was directed, more systematically than ever, towards gaining over Scotland. The difficulty was obvious, that an alliance between the two countries must needs mean Scotland following in the wake of England, which was galling to Scottish pride, and distasteful to their hereditary hatred of the English. Henry VII. succeeded, with the help of Spain, in bringing Scotland for the time into his circle of allied powers, and in cementing that union, as he hoped, by the marriage of his eldest daughter Margaret to the young king of Scots. Personal ties, however, seldom count for much as against national interests and prejudices, or even against the passions of kings : as soon as ever Henry VIII. entangled himself in a war with France, his brother-in-law followed the traditional practice of his predecessors and attacked England. There were plenty of small grievances on both sides, which might be used as pretexts ; but the only adequate reason for war was to be found in the Scottish king's own disposition. James IV., with the virtues of chivalry, carried to great lengths its fantastic follies, including total indifference to his own wife, and susceptibility to the fascinations of other women. Scottish chroniclers say that James was greatly influenced by a letter from the queen of France, sending him a turquoise ring and a sum of money, and begging him to take three steps on English ground for her sake : and whether this be true or not, it is in accordance with his character. The war was not altogether welcome to Scotland : some at least of the king's advisers thought the venture dangerous, or desired to maintain friendly relations with England. More than one attempt was made to work on James' well-known superstitiousness, the most daring being the midnight voice from the Cross at Edinburgh which Sir Walter Scott describes in *Marmion*. James had however gone too far to recede : he invaded England with an army which is said to have amounted to 100,000 men, and which certainly comprised every great noble in Scotland who was capable of bearing arms.

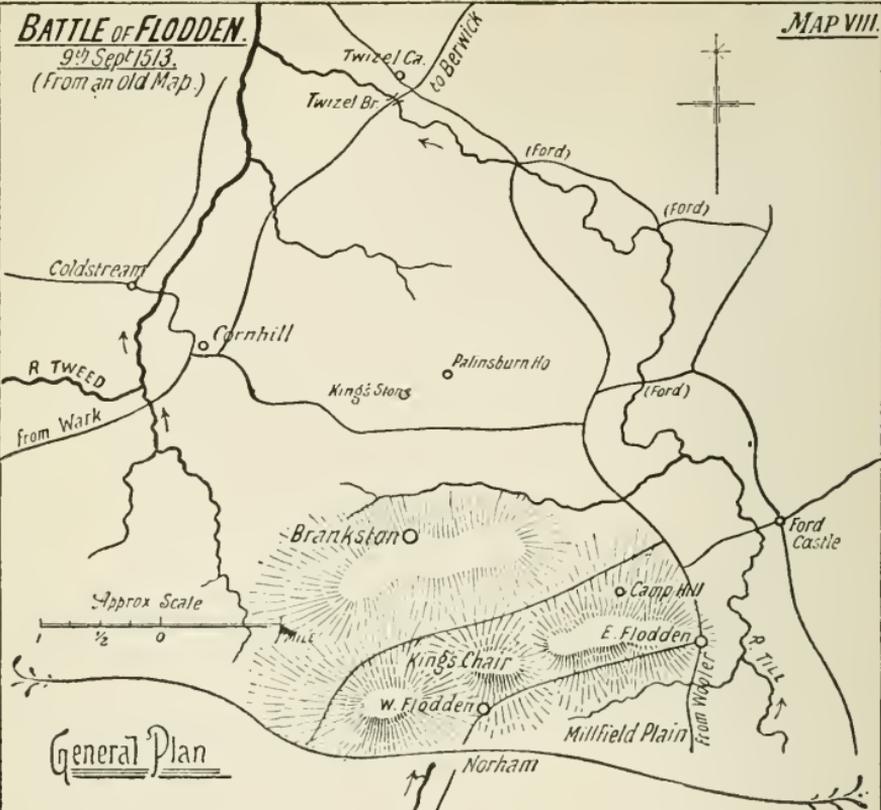
On August 22, 1513, the Scots crossed the border. The king seems to have had no definite purpose beyond gratifying his taste for knight-errantry. Norham Castle surrendered a week later, and there was no English army as yet ready to dispute his further advance: he might have penetrated far into England if he had chosen. Instead of this he occupied himself in taking Wark and other small castles, "enterprises worthy of a border chieftain," as a Scottish historian contemptuously remarks, and in devastating the country, to his own speedy detriment. Unless all the chroniclers were in a conspiracy to calumniate him, James was guilty of a far worse folly, quite in keeping with his character as a knight-errant, but absolutely unpardonable in a king and a general conducting a great war. After taking Ford Castle, he fell deeply in love with Lady Heron of Ford, and loitered day after day near Ford for her sake, until it was too late to advance. Meanwhile his army was suffering, provisions were failing, and the season was rainy. The army melted away by desertion to something like a third of its original strength: the numbers that fought at Flodden seem to be ascertained with tolerable certainty at not much over 30,000 on each side. The spirit of chivalry prevented the nobles leaving their king in the field, whatever the common soldiers might do: they stayed with James without influencing his conduct, and shared his fate.

Meanwhile the earl of Surrey, who had been entrusted with the defence of England during the king's absence in France, had gathered an army, which would have been largely overmatched at first if James had not wasted his opportunities. Surrey knew the man he had to deal with, and as soon as he felt himself strong enough, sent to the Scottish king a formal challenge to fight a battle on a given day, Friday, September 9. Of course the crowned knight-errant accepted the challenge, and thereby precluded himself from fighting earlier, as would have been to his obvious advantage. The aged earl of Angus, the famous Archibald Bell-the-Cat, who had played a great part in Scottish history for the last half-century, is said to have vainly implored the king not to accept: the only answer he could get was, "Angus, if you are afraid, you can go home." After such

BATTLE OF FLODDEN.

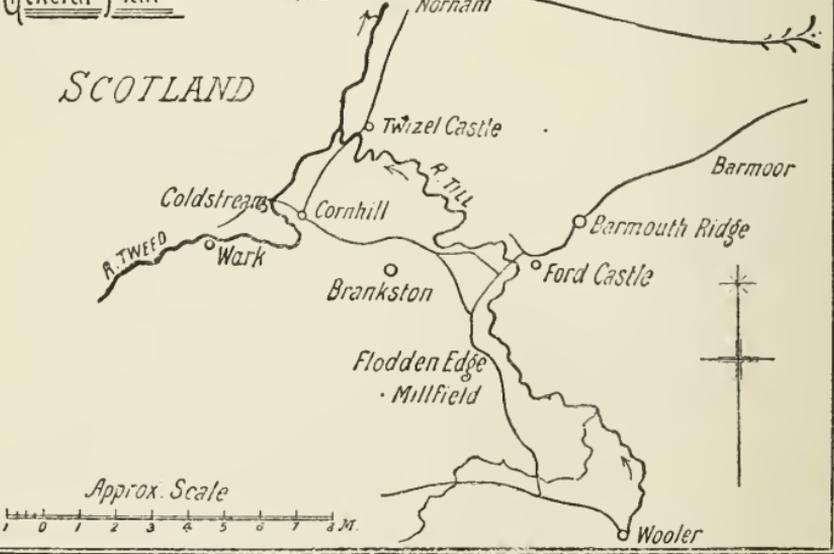
9th Sept 1513.
(From an old Map.)

MAP VIII.



General Plan

SCOTLAND



an insult, the old man could but go; but two of his sons remained to die with the king.

On September 7, Surrey reached Wooler, a few miles from the Scottish camp: on the previous day James moved from the low ground near Ford, and took up his position on Flodden Edge. The lower course of the Tweed, where it forms the boundary between England and Scotland, is towards the north-east. About ten miles from its mouth, a mile or two above Norham, the Till falls into it on the English side, nearly at right angles. Flodden Edge is a high ridge a mile or more in length, running east and west, nearly south of the mouth of the Till, and about five miles off; its easternmost end almost reaches the Till, just above Ford. The descent is abrupt on the south to the wide plain of Millfield, stretching along the Till nearly to Wooler. On the north the slope is more gradual, and is broken by a hollow rising to another lower ridge, beyond which the descent is continued to Brankston. Flodden Edge was an excellent position in which to await attack, at any rate from the south, but an impossible one for long occupation, being badly supplied with water, though not quite destitute of it. Local ingenuity, anxious to gratify the lovers of poetry, and devoid of military insight, points out a scanty spring on Flodden Edge as the "Sybil's Well" beside which the wounded Marmion was laid to die. As will be seen from the details of the battle, it is simply impossible that any Englishman should have come there, still more impossible that Marmion should have left Clare there under charge of his squires. Sir Walter Scott is not however in any way answerable for this mistake: in a note he expressly says that Sybil's well must be situated somewhere behind the English right. The well was of course the creature of his own imagination; and from the shape of the ground no spot in that quarter could have given the dying Marmion a view of the whole battle-field.

Surrey, on arriving at Wooler, and discovering where the Scots were, tried to play once more on James' weakness: he sent him a letter reproaching him for having quitted the level ground, and challenging him to come down on the appointed day and fight on the Millfield. This time however James refused even to hear the herald; either he was

visited by a stray gleam of common sense, or his nobles prevented the purport of the message from reaching him. Surrey was not at all the man to attack a formidable position if he could manœuvre his enemy out of it. Accordingly on September 8 he crossed the Till at Wooler and marched down its right bank, but far enough from the river to be concealed from the Scots by the high ground east of it. Halting for the night on Barmoor, he continued his march next morning, and recrossed the Till with his vanguard and artillery at Twizel Bridge close to its mouth, the rest of his army crossing by fords higher up the stream. Surrey was now between the Scots and their country: James must fight, and his promise was given to fight on that day.

James was ignorant or careless of every duty of a general. He did not know that Surrey had moved until the English were seen in the far distance crossing Twizel Bridge. The only precaution he had taken was to plant some cannon to command the bridge (if there was one then) or the ford on his right, leading across the Till to Ford.

“And why stands Scotland idly now,
 Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
 Since England gains the pass the while,
 And struggles through the deep defile?
 What checks the fiery soul of James?
 Why sits that champion of the dames
 Inactive on his steed,
 And sees, between him and his land,
 Between him and Tweed’s southern strand,
 His host Lord Surrey lead?
 What ’vails the vain knight-errant’s brand?
 —O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
 Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
 O for one hour of Wallace wight,
 Or well-skill’d Bruce, to rule the fight,
 And cry—‘Saint Andrew and our right!’
 Another sight had seen that morn,
 From Fate’s dark book a leaf been torn,
 And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
 The precious hour has pass’d in vain,
 And England’s host has gain’d the plain;
 Wheeling their march, and circling still,
 Around the base of Flodden hill.”

The censure is just, but not quite accurately placed. By the time James was aware of Surrey’s manœuvre it was

probably too late to attack him with his army half across the river, as Wallace had done with fatal effect at Cambuskenneth. James' first and unpardonable fault was in neglecting to watch Surrey's movements; his second was the usual halting between two opinions of a weak man. When he saw Surrey's whole army advancing towards him, he could neither be content to remain in his position, sufficiently formidable if not so strong as on the reverse aspect, nor resolve boldly to push on so as to encounter Surrey as soon as possible, with the angle of the Tweed and Till to enclose him fatally if defeated. Suddenly taking it into his head that the Brankston ridge in front either was a better position for himself, or would be a convenient one for the English, he ordered his camp to be fired, that the south wind might blow the smoke towards Surrey and conceal his movements, and descended from Flodden Edge. It did not occur to James that the smoke would prevent his seeing the English, which was much more important: they were steadily on the march and knew where they were going. It could have been no surprise to Surrey on reaching Brankston to see the Scots on the near ridge in front, though it was an obvious advantage to him that they had not yet had time to get fully into order.

The English army formed its line of battle on tolerably level ground, facing south, the Scots being on higher ground. Both armies were drawn up in the same manner, in four divisions, with a reserve of horsemen in rear of the centre. On the English right was Sir Edmund Howard, Surrey's younger son; next to him his brother the Admiral, next to him Surrey, and on the left Sir Edward Stanley, while Lord Dacre commanded the horsemen in reserve. Nothing is expressly said about it, but no doubt all the divisions were composed as usual of archers and spearmen combined. On the Scottish side the earls of Huntly and Home faced Sir Edmund Howard, Huntly with the Gordons of the north-eastern Highlands, Home with the borderers. Opposite to the Admiral were Crawford and Montrose, opposite Surrey was the king. On the Scottish right the earls of Lennox and Argyle had with them a mass of wild Highlanders. The earl of Bothwell was in reserve behind the centre.

The battle began about four p.m. with a cannonade. The

English guns were well served and did great execution ; the Scots were less skilful, and probably at a disadvantage from their hasty move. At any rate the artillery duel, as it would be called now-a-days, was so greatly in favour of the English that the Scots hastened to come to close quarters. On their left the borderers with their long spears charged home with such determination that they broke Sir Edmund Howard's line. The white lion banner of the Howards was trampled in the dust, part of the English right wing fled : it was only by the prompt support of Dacre's horsemen that defeat on this wing was averted. In the right centre the Admiral had a severe struggle with Crawford and Montrose, but ultimately prevailed, both the earls being slain. On the left the English success was much more decided : the wild clansmen, unable to bear the clothyard arrows, broke their ranks and dashed at the enemy, who beat them off with great slaughter. Meanwhile James in person had engaged Surrey, and being presently supported by the reserve under Bothwell pressed him hard. The day however was virtually decided : the success on the Scottish left was now more than neutralised, for Huntly had fled apparently before Dacre's first charge, and Home, isolated from the rest of the army, did not venture to renew the conflict, but drew off, watched and held in check by Dacre. The Admiral, after defeating Crawford, took James in flank : Stanley still more fatally attacked him on the right rear. The time for exhibiting the best side of knight-errantry had come : James, with a splendid courage which has more than half redeemed his credit, refused to yield. Forming themselves into the national circle, the Scots held their ground to the last.

“ But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
 Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
 Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
 Unbroken was the ring ;
 The stubborn spear-men still made good
 Their dark impenetrable wood,
 Each stepping where his comrade stood,
 The instant that he fell.
 No thought was there of dastard flight ;
 Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
 Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
 As fearlessly and well ;

Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands ;
 And from the charge they drew,
As mountain waves, from wasted lands,
 Swept back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know ;
Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
 Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
 While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
 To gain the Scottish land ;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong :
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear
 And broken was her shield !”

The Scottish loss in men was heavy, about 10,000 men, and the English paid for the victory with a loss of perhaps half the amount. But the rank of the Scots who fell made it a blow to the kingdom which perhaps has no equal in history. The king, his natural son the archbishop of St. Andrew's, twelve earls, or nearly every man of the highest rank below royalty, many other lords and chiefs of clans, all perished : there is scarcely a family of distinction in Scotland but had a member killed at Flodden. The last victory of the long-bow was even more complete than its first great triumph at Crecy. For to the bow is fairly to be attributed alike the defeat of the fierce rush of the Highlanders which proved so formidable on other occasions, and the last destruction wrought upon the nobles around their king.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT CIVIL WAR

CIVIL wars are not all of the same type. Sometimes the division is geographical, as in the great war between the northern and southern states of the American Union; sometimes the people throughout the country are separated into opposing ranks. Of course in neither case is the line likely to be drawn quite sharply: there were partisans of the north in the Confederate States: the preponderant feeling in some districts at least of a country divided against itself is sure to be strongly on one side or the other. The great English civil war of the seventeenth century is an instance of the latter type, though not in its most clearly marked form. There were large regions which were very decidedly royalist, others almost as distinctly parliamentary; but certainly there was something of royalist feeling everywhere, and probably anti-royalist feeling also. These facts determine to so large an extent the nature and course of the war that it cannot be understood without keeping them in mind. They give a political reason for conduct on both sides, which from the purely military point of view must be regarded as mistaken. No competent general in an ordinary war will fritter away his forces in holding a number of small posts: he will only occupy those which are of importance to his operations in the field, well knowing that victory will give him possession of the rest. In the English civil war both parties acted on the principle that it was worth while to hold posts in districts where the enemy predominated, as means of keeping alive the spirit of their own partisans in those regions: and both sides deemed it well worth while to capture such posts, at the cost of greatly

weakening their armies in the field. Nor can it be doubted that in the main they were right under the circumstances, though possibly there were instances in which acting in this manner was mistaken. In civil war it is emphatically true that until every spark is extinguished there is always a risk of the fire breaking out afresh.

The merits of the quarrel between Charles I. and his Parliament need not be discussed. Given that the question had once been raised whether the king was to be in the last resort master, or be bound to defer to the distinct wish of his people, a solution was only to be obtained by the king, or the representatives of the nation, definitely giving way. The ancient traditions of self-government made it certain that the Parliament would not yield except to armed force: the character and convictions of Charles I. made it equally certain not only that he would not yield, but that the conflict would be precipitated, rather than postponed, by his action.

England had not followed the example of the continental nations, which during the sixteenth century formed standing armies. Just before the civil war, there were no troops at all in England: in fact it was the necessity for putting down the Irish rebellion that brought about the final breach, as the Parliament would not trust the king with uncontrolled authority over the forces to be levied, and Charles would not bate an inch of his ancient prerogative. Hence it was of importance in the beginning of the war that the best raw material for an army was mainly on the king's side. Most of the gentry were royalist; and they, with their gamekeepers, grooms, etc., were naturally better skilled in the use of firearms, and (what was even more important) were more accustomed to riding than the rest of the population. The strong supporters of the Parliament were mostly found in the towns, merchants and shopkeepers, men ignorant of warlike pursuits, and little suited or inclined to incur in their own persons the hardships of war. England as a nation had engaged in no land warfare within living memory, except Buckingham's ill-conducted expedition to the Isle of Rhé. Many Englishmen however had seen service on the continent, in the earlier stages of the 'Thirty Years' War or in the last years of the Dutch

War of Independence; and those who served under Maurice or Frederick Henry of Nassau, still more under the great Gustavus,¹ learned in a good school. Thus there was a fair supply of officers possessing some experience, though few of them exhibited any great military skill, again mostly on the king's side; and the royalist soldiers, having already some useful knowledge, were fairly soon converted into adequate troops. The parliamentary recruits were largely drawn in the first instance from the lowest classes of the towns; and though, thanks to natural courage and stubbornness, the infantry proved always a match for the royalists, their cavalry, an arm which was in that age of primary importance, and obviously required much more time for training, proved themselves defective. A remedy was presently found: we are told that Oliver Cromwell, then only a captain, after seeing in the first battle the panic rout of most of the parliamentary horse, observed to his cousin Hampden, that they must have men of another stamp to match with these men of honour. He set to work to bring into the ranks the stern Puritan yeomen of the eastern counties, and to inspire them with a spirit of strict discipline. This took time, and for many months after the war began the king had on the whole the advantage; but no enemy ever got the better of Cromwell's Ironsides, and from the date at which cavalry animated by his ideas came into the field in any numbers, the preponderance went over decisively to the Parliament.

Though, as has been said, there was hardly a spot in England where both parties had not adherents, yet roughly speaking a line drawn from Hull to Weymouth would divide England into a larger royalist half, and a smaller parliamentarian half, as things were just after the war had begun. The Parliament had its headquarters in London: the eastern counties, using that term very widely, were strongly on its side: and though the royalists were fairly numerous in Kent, Surrey and Hants, yet they were there so far overmatched by their opponents that the authority of Parliament was recognised. The king, whose headquarters

¹ There had been many Scots in the service of Gustavus: and this fact made the Scottish intervention in the English civil war more weighty than it would otherwise have been.

after the first movements of the war were fixed in Oxford, was preponderant in the north (except Lancashire), in Wales (except Pembrokeshire) and the border counties, and in Cornwall, while the other south-western counties were more equally divided.

Charles I. finally set up his standard at Nottingham late in August 1642, whence he moved westwards to Chester, and when he had gathered sufficient forces marched on London. The earl of Essex, commanding the parliamentary army, had gone to Worcester to meet the king, and the first skirmish of the war took place at Powick bridge, just south of that city, on the very ground where nine years later was fought the last battle, the "crowning mercy" as Cromwell called it, which extinguished Charles II.'s last hopes of being restored by the aid of the Scots. It is a proof of the real inexperience of both sides that Charles and Essex moved towards London a few miles apart without either apparently being fully aware what the other was doing. On October 23 the king, who had the start, but had now come into hostile country, and therefore could not advance safely without beating off Essex, turned and fought at Edgehill on the southern edge of Warwickshire. The battle still further illustrated the rawness of both armies. The royalists gave away an advantage by coming down a fairly steep slope to meet their assailants: prince Rupert with the main body of their cavalry, after defeating the parliamentary horse opposed to him, pursued them headlong far away from the field, and then took to plundering Essex's baggage. The smaller body on the other wing were even more reckless, for they drove off only part of the cavalry opposed to them, leaving two small regiments untouched, in one of which was Cromwell's troop. How far this was due to want of discipline among the men, how far to lack of judgment in their commanders, it is difficult to tell; but the result was most disastrous to the king's cause. The infantry on both sides fought bravely, but two or three of Essex's regiments had been broken by the flying horsemen, and the king would have won a considerable victory but for the vigorous and effective way in which the few hundred cavalry that had escaped attack co-operated with the infantry. The clumsy, ill-made, slow-firing muskets

of the seventeenth century were not very formidable to cavalry, and a charge pressed home in earnest had a very good chance against a mixed body of musketeers and pikemen, unless the latter were fresh and in good order. When prince Rupert at length returned to the field, Essex's infantry had got on the whole the best of it, though the royalists were hardly defeated: it was too late to begin again, and the battle remained drawn. The king's one chance of finishing the war at a blow was lost.

Charles advanced as far as Brentford, but the troops drawn out for the defence of London were too strong to be attacked, and he withdrew to Oxford, and entered on useless negotiations for peace. When active hostilities were resumed in the spring of 1643, all went favourably for the king. John Hampden, one of the most important leaders in the House of Commons, was killed in a skirmish: a series of successes in the field gave the whole south-west, with the important exception of Plymouth, into royalist hands: a victory at Atherton Moor drove Fairfax into Hull, and made the king master of all the rest of Yorkshire. Had Charles boldly marched on London, it is possible that the citizens in their dismay would have submitted. But Charles was hardly the man to take an audacious resolve; and it would have been audacious, even if no stronger word be applicable, to advance on London with his own immediate forces. His right wing, so to speak, was tied to the west by Plymouth, the garrison of which, if left unbesieged, would soon have revived the partisans of Parliament in the west. His left wing was still more closely fettered by the necessity of observing Hull. Moreover behind the king lay Gloucester, well garrisoned, and interrupting at a vital point, the lowest bridge on the Severn, free communication between the royalists of the south and west. Ordinary military judgment pointed out the capture of Gloucester as the most useful enterprise he could attempt, while waiting for the co-operation of Hopton from the west, of Newcastle from the north. The Parliament realised the supreme importance of Gloucester, and Essex, with an army consisting largely of the London train-bands, marched to relieve the place. Charles was obliged to raise the siege, and on his return to Oxford fought with Essex the bloody

and indecisive battle of Newbury. The tide of royalist success had been stemmed, but no more. The outlook for the parliamentary cause seemed so gloomy that Pym, their greatest statesman, negotiated with his dying breath, at the price of important concessions to the Presbyterian spirit, for the assistance of the Scots for the next campaign. Things however were in reality less black than they seemed: in the eastern counties not only had their cause completely triumphed, but an army was being organised which was to turn the scale in the next year. This army was commanded by the earl of Manchester, under whom was Cromwell at the head of the cavalry, which was the specially important arm. In it the ideas which Cromwell had been the first to act on were definitely carried out. To quote the description of it sent to London by an admiring correspondent of a newspaper—"Neither is his army so formidable in number as exact in discipline; and that they might be all of one mind in religion as of resolution in the field, with a severe eye he hath looked into the manners of all those who are his officers, and cashiered those whom he found to be in any way irregular in their lives or disaffected to the cause. This brave army is our violets and primroses, the first-fruits of the spring, which the Parliament sends forth this year, for the growth of our religion, and the re-implanting of this kingdom in the garden of peace and truth."

Early in 1644 a Scottish army crossed the Tweed, and gradually pushed Newcastle back, till in April, when Fairfax was able to unite with them, they were strong enough to shut him up in York. Two or three weeks earlier Waller had won a victory at Cheriton in Hampshire, which finally assured the south-east to the Parliament, and which, though on a small scale, is an interesting prelude to Marston Moor, as exhibiting superiority of discipline passed over to the parliamentary side. Two or three weeks later Manchester's army came up to help in the siege of York. Newcastle was clearly doomed, unless assistance reached him. Months before, prince Rupert had been despatched by Charles with a small body of men to raise an army in the Severn region, and he was now, in accordance with his own earnest wish, ordered to relieve York. Making his way up through Lancashire, he ultimately crossed the Pennine hills from

Skipton into the valley of the Wharfe. The governing committee of the Parliament had been anxious that the armies of Manchester and Fairfax should be sent into Lancashire to encounter Rupert, who had spent more than a month in taking various small places. Rupert was acting on the plan largely followed throughout the war; but on this occasion at least it was very mistaken policy. The capture of Newcastle's army in York would have been ill compensated by advantages tenfold greater than Rupert obtained in Lancashire; and York was very nearly lost. The generals were wiser than their government: they refused to raise the siege while a chance remained of capturing the city. If Rupert appeared they would fight him; and then, as they wrote to the committee, "if it please God to give us the victory, all Lancashire and Yorkshire will fall to us." At the same time they were well aware that in that case they would have to raise the siege, and they therefore pressed it vigorously, all the more so after intercepting a letter from Newcastle begging Rupert to make haste, as he could only hold out a few days longer. But for the folly of Crawford,¹ third in command under Manchester, who exploded a mine without waiting for the co-operation of the Scots or of Fairfax, so that his own assault being unsupported was repulsed, York would in fact have been taken; but Crawford's failure gave the besieged just respite enough. On June 30 the generals heard that Rupert was at Knaresborough, only twelve miles off; the next morning therefore they raised the siege and marched towards him. Rupert however made a circuit northwards, crossing the Ure at Boroughbridge, and came down the left bank of the Ouse to join Newcastle, protected by the river from any possibility of the parliamentary forces intercepting him or taking him in flank. The fiery prince, who had in his pocket a letter from the king which he averred to be positive orders² to fight the rebels, and who was Newcastle's superior officer, insisted on marching at once after the

¹ It is significant of the superior importance of the cavalry in the seventeenth century that the lieutenant-general, second in command, led the cavalry, the infantry being under the major-general, third in command.

² The letter is rather confused, but it can hardly bear this meaning, though it undoubtedly authorised fighting a battle.

enemy. It cannot for a moment be maintained that he was wrong; though he was slightly inferior in numbers, his enemies might very reasonably be assumed to be hampered, as in fact they were, by difficulties arising from divided command, and from divergence of views as to the most important object to be attained.

The parliamentary army had moved westward from York, on the morning of July 1, and marched about half-way to Knaresborough. When the generals found that Rupert had given them the slip, and that a battle was out of the question unless he came out of York to seek them, serious difference of opinion seems to have arisen. The Scots, we are told, the earl of Leven and his lieutenant-general David Leslie, were for the prudent course of retreating. Considerable reinforcements were expected, and the junction with them would be best secured by retiring on Tadcaster. The English generals, or some of them, were for holding their ground; if this be true, it is safe to assume that Cromwell was for fighting, and probably also the Fairfaxes, father and son, as they were always of one mind, and usually for bold counsels. Whatever may have been the opinions, there was no supreme authority, and it was therefore inevitable that the prudent plan should be adopted. On July 2 the infantry started for Tadcaster; the cavalry, or a great part of the cavalry (for all the three lieutenant-generals were with them), remained on the moor to cover the retreat. About two o'clock Rupert's army was seen approaching from York; a message was sent hastily after the infantry, who retraced their steps, and assumed a position in which to await the oncoming royalists. Rupert was in no situation to attack at once; in fact he himself was not on the field till later, having been detained in York in order to appease Newcastle's troops, who were mutinous for lack of pay. During the whole afternoon the two armies "looked one another in the face." Why Leven was unwilling to attack then, and did so at evening, when Newcastle's men had reached the field, is not easy to understand: possibly the conflict of opinion, whether or not to fight if they had the option, was still undecided. At any rate it was not till about seven o'clock that the action was begun, by the advance of their whole line.

The battle of Marston Moor is in some respects one of the simplest ever fought. Very little depended on the ground, either in its natural formation, or in artificial features such as enclosures. The armies came straight into collision along their whole front. The numbers differed but little, the stubborn courage of both sides was unmistakably great, yet on both sides large bodies were utterly broken up by defeat. Yet from another point of view Marston Moor is possessed of very special interest: the battle was won by the perfect discipline of Cromwell's horse, and by the coolness which prevented him from being carried away by the excitement of immediate victory, and losing sight of the general issue.

The parliamentary army was posted on a ridge of ground lying south of the wide expanse of moorland, now all enclosed and cultivated, which stretched nearly to York. At the northern foot of this ridge, which was covered at the time of the battle with rye full grown though not ripe, runs a lane joining two hamlets, Long Marston and Tockwith, about a mile and a half apart. North of this line the moor rose, quite open and bare, though there was a wood a mile or so to the northwards. The moor was divided from the lane by a ditch, which has since disappeared, and therefore cannot be placed with accuracy. A little way from this ditch Rupert drew up his line, so near to it in fact that a battle must ensue, as neither side could possibly withdraw in safety. At the same time the ditch was a sufficient obstacle to make both sides somewhat reluctant to begin. Neither side seems to have thought it worth while to attempt to utilise the enclosures of Long Marston or Tockwith: indeed they could not have been occupied without departing from the established tactics of the day, which drew up the infantry in the centre, placing cavalry on each wing. Obviously the enclosures would have been fatal to the full use of the cavalry.

The threefold division of the parliamentary army was naturally retained in the order of battle. Manchester's troops were on the left of the line, Cromwell's cavalry reinforced by three Scottish regiments under David Leslie being on the flank, and the infantry commanded by Crawford to their right. In the centre were part of the Scottish

infantry under Baillie; to their right Lord Fairfax commanded his own infantry, with the rest of the Scots in reserve behind him. The extreme right was occupied by Sir Thomas Fairfax's horse, again with a reserve of Scottish cavalry in rear. The numbers seem to have been about 19,000 foot and 7600 horse, the royalists having some 3000 less infantry but being equally strong in cavalry. The proportion of cavalry to infantry is enormous if measured by modern standards, though it was exceeded in some other battles of the war. This was of course natural, in view of the superior value of cavalry in action, as compared to the ill-armed infantry of that age. The royalist line was formed in a similar fashion. Rupert's infantry was on the right, Newcastle's on the left; the prince commanded in person the horse on the right wing, Goring those on the left. It seems strange to a modern reader, who habitually associates the idea of marked uniform colours with the soldier's appearance, to find that Newcastle's infantry attracted special notice as the Whitecoats, because the marquis had clothed them alike in undyed cloth, and that the parliamentary soldiers all wore white ribbons or paper in their hats in order to recognise one another. An equally marked contrast with the warfare of to-day is to be found in the fact that both sides, having twenty or thirty guns, merely used them during the afternoon for a little futile cannonading, and ignored them entirely in the real battle.

Rupert had, as we have seen, put it out of his power to decline battle, by drawing up his line so close to the enemy. No doubt he had fully intended to attack as soon as Newcastle came up; but the cautious veteran who commanded Newcastle's foot urged that it was too late in the day, and Rupert, according to one account, called for food, saying he would attack them in the morning. But he had no longer the choice: almost at this moment the enemy's whole line advanced, the left slightly leading. Rupert at once charged Cromwell's horse, and in the first collision got the advantage, Cromwell himself being slightly wounded. Leslie however who followed soon turned the scale back again, and before long Rupert's hitherto unbeaten cavalry was totally routed. In front of Crawford the ditch had been filled up, and the royalists had apparently crowded in to their left for the sake

of the protection the ditch afforded. This was a serious mistake, for Crawford advancing at first unchecked could turn and take the royalist infantry in flank, thus greatly facilitating Baillie's passage of the ditch. The royalists defended themselves stubbornly, but they were still getting the worst of it. On the right however things had gone very differently. In front of Fairfax the moor was covered with furze-bushes, which compelled him to advance by a lane which led up on to the moor from the country road behind which had been their original position. This gave an obvious advantage to his immediate opponents, who occupied enclosures on each side of the lane, and inflicted on Fairfax a check, which the overthrow of the cavalry on his right converted into rout. Sir Thomas Fairfax there encountered Goring with signal ill success. He himself with his own troop broke through the enemy, but the remainder were driven back on the infantry, scattering them utterly. The Scottish cavalry was apparently swept away by the rush of fugitives, whom Goring with most of his men pursued far off the field, and then turned to plunder the enemy's baggage. The precedent of Edgehill was followed, with even more disastrous results. For the moment however the battle seemed still to be going well for the royalists. Some of Goring's command had been sufficiently alive to common sense to remain on the field; and their attack on the flank of the Scottish infantry, combined with the Whitecoats in front, gradually broke most of it. Baillie with three regiments stood his ground heroically; but Leven himself came at last to the conclusion that the day was lost, and fled from the field, never halting, according to the perhaps slanderous report of narrators who did not love the Scots, till he reached Leeds. Help came just in time to save Baillie from destruction, and ultimately convert defeat into decisive victory. Cromwell had by this time completed the rout of Rupert's wing, and had halted, with his men well in hand, behind the royalist line, to make out how the battle was going and where he could strike in effectually. Sir Thomas Fairfax, tearing off his white badge, had succeeded in making his way round the rear of the royalists, and encountering Cromwell was able to tell him what was happening under the smoke. He saw at once his opportunity. Bidding

Leslie charge into the rear of the Whitecoats, he led his own men round, as Fairfax had come, encountered and totally routed Goring's horsemen, returning in confusion from their reckless raid. The Whitecoats perished almost to a man: and then Cromwell and Leslie had no difficulty in completing the victory, by breaking up the rest of the royalist infantry, with which Crawford and Baillie had been engaged.

A battle so stubbornly contested and involving such vicissitudes was necessarily a bloody one. According to one eye-witness over 4000 bodies were buried on the field. The royalist cause was utterly ruined in the north, though prince Rupert rallied a few thousand men. York surrendered in a few days: before the winter nothing was left to the king in the whole of the north and northern midlands except a few isolated posts. Marston Moor is rightly regarded as the turning-point of the civil war. The victory was conspicuously due to Oliver Cromwell personally, and to the troops raised by him and trained on his principles. This naturally gave great additional weight to the Independents, the party partly religious and partly political which he represented—all the more so because of the comparative failure of the Scots, the champions of Presbyterianism, whose valour was in truth somewhat unfairly decried. The most important, for the time being at least, of the ideas of the Independents was the conviction that the war could only be adequately waged by strong measures, by leaders who meant to win thoroughly, and by troops that could and would fight effectively. The victory of Marston Moor was a clinching argument in favour of the New Model army. Marston Moor was however much more than the decisive event in a conflict between two contending parties. It produced consequences more far-reaching than any battle ever fought on British soil, except perhaps Hastings. If ideas rule the world, it is one of the most important in human history. When the royalist gentry went down before Cromwell's Ironsides, absolutism received its death-wound. The great issue, whether the king or the nation should be supreme, was decided in favour of the nation, though generations had yet to elapse before the full results were attained. And since England alone set the example, and stored up the ideas, from which political liberty in other countries has

been derived, it is hard to see what hope would have been left for sober freedom anywhere.¹ Had Charles I. definitely triumphed in the civil war, and stamped out by force Puritanism in the widest sense of the word, the circle of absolute monarchies would have been complete. The United States of America, the French Republic, the constitutional Parliaments of Germany, Austria, Italy owe their existence to the victory of Marston Moor.

Great however as the ultimate political consequences were, the immediate military results of Marston Moor were limited to the north. While Rupert was approaching York, the king began a campaign in the south, which, thanks to the obstinacy of Essex, was completely successful. Essex and Waller, each in command of a small army, were left to face the king at Oxford: and if they could have cordially co-operated, they ought to have been at least a match for him. The rivalry between them was however too strong, nor was the governing committee in a position to dismiss either. Essex insisted on marching into the south-west, which he hoped to regain, and on leaving Waller to cope with Charles. Waller's forces were however very difficult to keep together: his money was expended, and his men were nearly all enlisted for very short periods. Charles found no difficulty in leaving Oxford adequately guarded, and following Essex. The latter, in a country on the whole unfriendly, was ultimately driven into Cornwall, where his infantry surrendered or dispersed, though he himself with his cavalry escaped by sea. When the king returned eastward, the difficulties of the Parliament reached their height. Essex and Waller agreed as little as ever, and Manchester, whose army had now been drawn down from the eastern counties, was more impracticable than either. The army which encountered Charles on October 17 in a second battle at Newbury, was directed by a council in which sat two civilians: there was no commander over the whole. Naturally the result of the action was indecisive. Fought on intricate ground, it was an infantry battle; and the

¹ Switzerland need not be forgotten, but Switzerland could under no circumstances have wielded the European influence exerted by English ideas, backed by the vast power, military, naval and commercial, of the England of Marlborough, and Chatham, and Nelson.

soldiers of the Parliament proved themselves somewhat superior in the stubborn determination which was in truth conspicuous on both sides. As the final result the king was able, not without heavy loss, to return to his head-quarters at Oxford, without losing the minor posts which served as its outlying defences.

During the winter the Independent party, who were in earnest about crushing the king's power, and many of whom were inclined to believe that the only means of reaching a permanent settlement lay in deposing him, gained the upper hand in the House of Commons. They saw the necessity of organising an army the soldiers of which should be permanently enlisted and brought under thorough discipline, on the model in fact of Cromwell's regiments. They saw also the necessity of removing from the command men like Manchester, and even Essex, who were almost as much afraid of victory which should destroy the king, as of defeat which should leave him absolute. As a means to this end they proposed the Self-denying Ordinance, which disqualified all members of both houses from holding military commands; but the Lords rejected it. The latter however agreed to the scheme for a New Model army, to consist of 21,000 men regularly paid out of the taxes, and therefore dependent on no mere local resources, to be commanded by the younger Fairfax. Having done so they passed a new Self-denying Ordinance, which merely required that members of both houses should resign the posts they held, but contained no proviso against re-appointment. It is plain that the Lords were actuated by motives partly selfish, partly political: they desired if possible to retain control over the armies. But the result of their action was to make possible the retention of Cromwell's invaluable services; he, on the contrary, out of zeal for the cause, had inspired the first proposal, which would have compelled him to retire. The organisation of the New Model was none too rapidly completed; but when it did take the field it proved irresistible.

The need of the Parliament was all the greater because for the campaign of 1645 their Scottish auxiliaries were practically not available. Late in the previous summer Montrose had succeeded in inducing a great part of the Highlands to take up arms for the king, and in a series of

short campaigns, continued contrary to the usual practice of that age through the winter, had inflicted so many blows on the king's enemies all over Scotland that Leven's army was much wanted at home. Rupert, who was in the Severn region, urged his uncle to join him with all available troops, and make a push northwards, so as to defeat or drive away Leven's much diminished forces, and restore the royalist cause in the north of England, before the New Model army was ready. But for a brilliant dash made by Cromwell, who at the head of 1500 cavalry swept right round Oxford, defeating one detachment after another, and clearing the neighbourhood of all draught horses, there might have been time to achieve much. The delay thus caused prevented Charles from taking the field for some little time: but the Parliament went far towards neutralising this advantage by instructing Fairfax to go into Somerset and relieve Taunton, the most strongly Puritan town of the west, which was in great straits. Hearing that the king had called to Oxford some of the royalist troops in the west, they recalled Fairfax, too late to prevent the king marching where he pleased. They followed up this waste of time, which was not altogether their fault, by the error of bidding Fairfax besiege Oxford, where the king was not: it ought to have been sufficiently plain that to defeat the king's army in the field was the one paramount object. The king however, instead of either going northwards in earnest, which might have achieved something, or gathering every available man to face Fairfax, which would at any rate have brought matters boldly to a crisis, pushed across to Leicester, which he stormed after a few days' siege. Here he heard that Oxford was badly straitened for provisions, and must surrender unless soon relieved. Nothing can more strongly mark the incompetence of the king and his officers to administer, however they might fight, than his having left his head-quarters on a vague campaign, without having satisfied himself that the city was adequately provisioned to stand the siege which he knew was impending. There was nothing for it but to turn back towards Oxford. At Daventry the king learned that Fairfax had abandoned the siege; and he accordingly halted, not venturing to go northwards again until he knew that Oxford was properly supplied.

On the news of the storm of Leicester, the Parliament bade Fairfax take the field against the king, and at the same time acceded to the unanimous request of Fairfax's officers that Cromwell might be appointed to the vacant post of lieutenant-general. Such was the presumptuous contempt of the royalists for the New Model, that they allowed Fairfax to approach within a dozen miles of Daventry before they heard that he was moving towards them at all. They then withdrew a little further north to Market Harborough, but on Fairfax pressing on they saw that a battle was inevitable, and returned southwards to meet him.

The battle of Naseby merits but little description; it was Marston Moor over again, only with the superiority of numbers greatly on the parliamentary side; and therefore victory was much more easily won. Fairfax drew up his army behind the crest of a line of hills, so that the enemy could not see their numbers till he was committed to an attack. As usual the infantry was in the centre, with Skippon at their head; Cromwell commanded the cavalry on the right wing, Ireton on the left. The royalist infantry was under Sir Jacob Astley, Rupert on the right wing, Langdale on the left, Charles himself headed a small reserve. Fairfax numbered less than 14,000 men, but even so he had nearly double the king's strength. As in all the battles of the war where the ground did not absolutely prevent it, there was a direct attack all along the line, the royalists having the disadvantage of advancing up-hill. The infantry engaged in a fierce struggle, which remained doubtful till the cavalry intervened. Ireton was somewhat hampered by the roughness of the ground, and a great part of his wing was defeated by Rupert's charge and pursued off the field. It seems scarcely credible that Rupert should have been so feather-brained, after repeated experience: but he galloped as far as Naseby village, a mile and more in rear, and would have plundered Fairfax's baggage had not the guard fired on him. Then he awoke to his duty, and returned to the field, but even in that short time the battle was over. Cromwell had had no real trouble in overthrowing the weaker royalist cavalry opposed to him; as they bore down upon the reserve, followed hard by part of Cromwell's force, the king ordered his reserve cavalry to charge the pursuers,

and rode forward to place himself at their head. As he did so, one of his suite seized his bridle, and turned his horse round, exclaiming "Will you go upon your death?" It was the best thing Charles could have done, for his own fame and for the cause he represented. He yielded however, and the reserve retreated a little way, and then halted again to await the inevitable. Cromwell, and the unbroken parts of Ireton's wing, were meanwhile charging into the flanks and rear of the royalist infantry. Many surrendered, the rest were cut to pieces: the king's infantry ceased to exist. When Rupert had by a circuit regained the king, there was nothing left but to escape. The king's baggage fell into the hands of the victors, including all his correspondence. The Parliament with excellent judgment instantly published a selection of the letters, under the title of "The King's Cabinet Opened," which did more harm to his cause than the loss of the battle of Naseby. The one unpardonable offence in the eyes of Englishmen has ever been the bringing in of foreigners to interfere in their affairs. And Charles was convicted out of his own mouth of incessant intrigues to get help not only from Irish and Scottish Celts, who though fellow-subjects were detested as semi-savages, but from France, Holland, Lorraine, from any one who could be importuned or bribed (with promises only) to send him aid.

The king with his usual optimism thought all could yet be put right: even the total overthrow of Montrose two or three months later did not impress him. The war was however virtually decided at Naseby, though all hostilities had not quite terminated a year later. The New Model army made short work with the royalists in Somersetshire; the last force which the king had in the open field was crushed at Stow on the Wold; castle after castle surrendered. The king presently shut himself up in Oxford, whence in the spring of 1646 he stole across England and took refuge in the camp of the Scots, to their extreme discomfiture. After an interval the Scots yielded up the king on the demand of the English Parliament. Many months elapsed, filled with negotiations for the restoration of Charles to his throne on terms, negotiations rendered abortive partly by the antagonism between Independents and Presbyterians,

mainly by the king's own incurable inability to look facts in the face, or to abide by any plan or promise. An attempt of the moderate party in Scotland to restore him to his throne, by an invasion combined with risings of the English royalists, failed disastrously. The Independents held Charles to be guilty of this wanton bloodshed, and forcibly ejecting their opponents from the House of Commons took possession of the government. Their first act was to bring Charles to trial and public execution : their next to declare the monarchy and the House of Lords abolished, and to confide the executive authority to a council chosen by the Commons. This new experiment in politics worked with very fair success, seeing that they had all the world against them outside England, and were only supported in England itself by a comparatively small minority, who however had the enormous advantage of knowing their own minds. Cromwell was sent over to reduce Ireland to submission, which he did effectively. He had hardly completed the task when he was recalled to make war on Scotland, which had declared for Charles II.

On July 22, 1650, Cromwell crossed the Tweed, and marched towards Edinburgh. His old coadjutor at Marston Moor, David Leslie, was in command against him, and by skilful manœuvring in the country round the capital, managed to keep Cromwell at bay for several weeks, without being forced to an engagement. Supplies at length began to fail, and Cromwell reluctantly began a retreat by the coast road as far as Dunbar. If supplies could be brought him thither by sea, which depended on the weather, there being no good harbour, he could still hold his ground : if not he must retire into England. Leslie followed at once, further inland ; having the shorter distance to go he succeeded in blocking the roads beyond Dunbar, and encamped on the heights to landward of the town, Cromwell occupying the level ground along the seashore. The Scottish position was unassailable, as Leslie's positions had been in Midlothian : moreover there had been a good deal of sickness in the English army, due chiefly to the wet weather, which had reduced its numbers to little more than half those of the enemy. Unless Leslie made a mistake, Cromwell would have to embark, and confess that he had

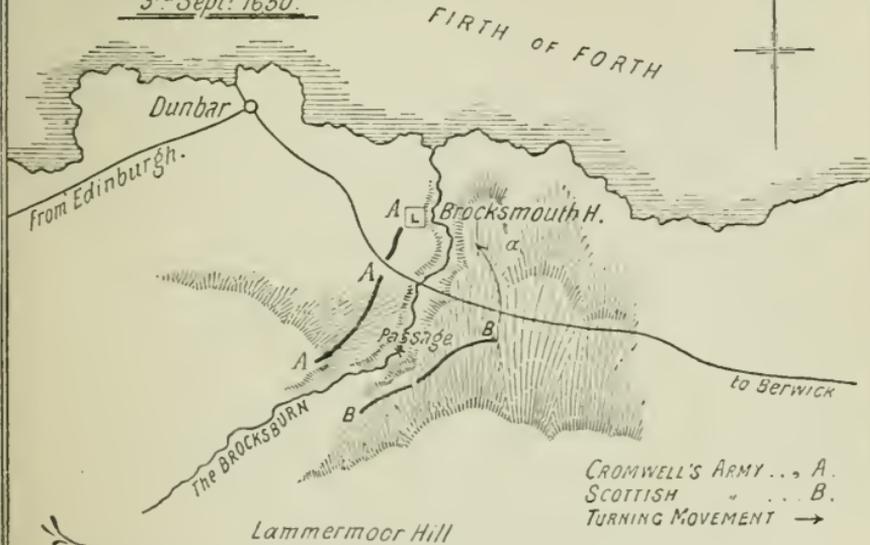
failed totally. It was reported afterwards that the committee of the Presbyterian Kirk pressed Leslie not to allow Cromwell to escape, and that he in consequence made the disastrous move which led to his defeat. There is however no adequate authority for this, any more than for the well-known anecdote that Cromwell, noting Leslie's false move, exclaimed, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hand:" either would be in keeping, and is therefore all the more likely to have been invented. The one excuse for Leslie's blunder lay in the fact that his army was encamped on bare hills in frightful weather, a state of things which could not be continued indefinitely. Confidence in his superior numbers may easily have led him to believe that he could afford to move down and force Cromwell to fight: possibly a safe way of doing this might have been found, but the movement he actually made exposed him to a fatal blow.

A little stream called the Brocksburn flows along the base of the hills on which Leslie was posted, and then northwards across into the sea, a mile or so east of Dunbar, flowing at the bottom of a little ravine which it has hollowed out for itself. There were but two points where the steep banks of this ravine were broken enough to allow even carts to pass, one close under the hills, which was held by Leslie's outposts, the other a little way out into the plain, where the high-road from Dunbar towards Berwick runs. Cromwell's army lay on the Dunbar side of this stream, which formed something of a defence for his front. If Leslie could occupy the spot where the high-road crosses the Brocksburn, he could compel an action when he pleased, besides more effectually blocking any communication with England. In order however to do this, he drew down his whole army on to the narrow strip of ground between the burn and the base of the steep slope, and then edged his whole line somewhat to the right, so that his right wing, with most part of his cavalry, lay beyond the road. Cromwell coming out of Dunbar to his camp late in the afternoon, saw the movement being completed. He instantly perceived the opportunity it gave him, and pointed it out to Lambert his major-general: "to which he instantly replied that he had thought to have said the same

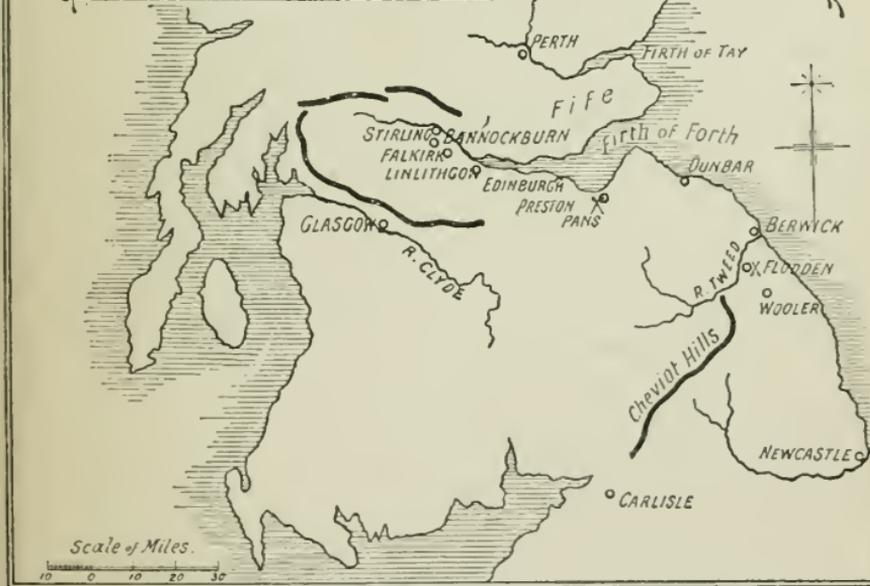
BATTLE OF DUNBAR.

3rd Sept: 1650.

MAP IX.



GENERAL MAP of PART of SCOTLAND.



thing to me." The opportunity was much like that which Marlborough saw at Ramillies, and was used with equally decisive effect. If Leslie's right wing were attacked with superior force, it could be overpowered before the rest of the army, cramped in the narrow strip of ground between the Brocksburn and the hill, could move to its support. And Cromwell could bring overwhelming strength to bear in spite of his inferiority of numbers, because the enemy could not cross the burn elsewhere to make a counter attack. Under cover of darkness the English troops could be massed opposite the slope giving access across the burn to the enemy's position.¹ The assault was to have been made at dawn on September 3, but was a little delayed: the enemy were consequently not surprised. "Before our foot could come up, the enemy made a gallant resistance, and there was a very hot dispute at sword's-point between our horse and theirs. Our first foot after that they had discharged their duty (being overpowered with the enemy) received some repulse, which they soon recovered. For my own regiment under the command of lieutenant-colonel Goffe, and my major, White, did come seasonably in; and, at the push of pike, did repel the stoutest regiment the enemy had there, merely with the courage the Lord was pleased to give. Which proved a great amazement to the residue of their foot; this being the first action between the foot. The horse in the meantime did, with a great deal of courage and spirit, beat back all oppositions; charging through the bodies of the enemy's horse and of their foot: who were, after the first repulse given, made by the Lord of Hosts as stubble to their swords."² The quality of the English troops was probably superior, and their officers more experienced; they had the *impetus* of the first rush to help them, and so far as can be judged superior

¹ Hodgson, an officer who was in the battle, says that Cromwell sent four regiments to circle round the enclosures of Brocksmouth House and fall on the enemy's right flank. Such a manœuvre was hard to work accurately in the dark, but if successful was bound to be decisive. The evidence is good: but this very decisiveness makes me hesitate to believe that Cromwell himself, to say nothing of other narrators, could have described the battle without mentioning so important a fact.

² Quoted from Cromwell's despatch to the Speaker.

numbers at the critical point. Naturally the struggle, though sharp, was not long. Just as the sun rose over the sea, "I heard Nol say," relates an officer who was in the battle, "in the words of the Psalmist, Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered." The defeated portion of the Scots fled eastwards, abandoning everything; the rest of Leslie's army, taken in flank, and with hardly any cavalry left, was able to make no resistance. Cromwell reported nearly 10,000 prisoners, and 3000 of the enemy killed, while his own loss was but small. The Scottish army was virtually annihilated.

The natural consequence was that Cromwell took possession of Edinburgh unopposed; and though he did not proceed to further conquest, there being political dissension enough among the Scots to render it probable that peaceable measures would suffice, yet to all intents and purposes Dunbar rendered him master of the Lowlands. So matters remained through the winter, Cromwell being personally much hampered by illness, a chill caught on an expedition in February having developed into ague, from which he suffered frequently, and which killed him a few years later. The next summer, the Scottish army, with Charles II. nominally at their head, took advantage of Cromwell's moving into Fife and Perthshire to make a last desperate venture. It is suggested, though it is hardly probable, that Cromwell gave them the opportunity on purpose; whether this were so or not, nothing could have been more advantageous to the cause of the Commonwealth. The Scots marched southwards, crossed the border at Carlisle, and made their way through Lancashire, Cheshire, and Shropshire, meeting with much less support from the English population than the young king's sanguine advisers had expected. By the time they reached Worcester Cromwell was upon them: he had pushed his own cavalry in pursuit as soon as he heard of their march, following himself with the foot by the eastern route, and begging the government to send what troops they could to meet him. The battle of Worcester, fought on the anniversary of Dunbar, was a foregone conclusion: Cromwell had about 30,000 against 20,000 or less, and defeated the enemy with considerable loss. The defeated Scots, far from their own country, nearly all

surrendered themselves prisoners. The "crowning mercy," as Cromwell called it, put a final end to the civil war, and led to the complete submission of Scotland, which sent members to all the Parliaments of the Protectorate.

INTERMEDIATE NOTE

STANDING ARMIES

In 1658, on the anniversary of his two last victories, which was also his birthday, the great Protector died. With him practically expired the fabric of government which he had built up; and the nation a year and a half later recalled Charles II. The Protector's power had depended greatly on the army, which had been used after his death no longer to support steady if arbitrary government, but to further the interests of individuals or of factions. Naturally at the Restoration there was a strong feeling among the royalists against a standing army, though it is only fair to the best conducted body which ever bore that title, to point out that the many interferences of the army in public affairs, before the abolition of the monarchy and during the Commonwealth, were due to the strong feeling of all ranks, that as being soldiers they were all the more bound to do their duty as citizens, and not to the opposite tendency of soldiers to obey their chiefs in blind indifference to every political consideration. Everywhere except in England standing armies prevailed, and everywhere except in England the kings were absolute. Charles II. had had ample opportunities for imbibing the ideas of his contemporaries, especially of his cousin Louis XIV. He had all the will to be absolute, but would not take trouble to make himself so. Had it rested with him alone, he would no doubt have been glad to maintain a standing army like his neighbours. The cavaliers of the Restoration, however, partly from recent and painful experience, partly imbued with the traditional English jealousy of military force in any shape, were resolute that there should be none. They affirmed positively the principle for which Charles I. had contended, that the king was the sole and uncontrolled head of the armed forces of the state; but they took very good care, in resettling the royal revenue, that the king should not have the means of maintaining an army. Charles nevertheless made a beginning; he took into his service the regiment of General Monk, a prime agent in the Restoration, which has since been known as the Coldstream Guards. To them he added other regiments, one by one as occasion offered,

and his brother James followed his example. On the deposition of the latter, Parliament affirmed in the Declaration of Right the maxim, very dubious as a statement of historical fact, but very rational as a principle of government, that "the maintenance of a standing army in time of peace, without consent of Parliament, is illegal."

Nevertheless the art of war had undergone such a transformation that a standing army was a necessity unless England were to abjure all interest in European affairs, almost a necessity if she would preserve her independence. It was no longer possible to extemporise efficient armies, as in the earlier middle ages: the superior strength given by discipline, which takes time and practice, was fully recognised. The providing of artillery, and of ammunition, to say nothing of supplies of other kinds, was become a complicated and expensive business, which could not be properly carried out except under the permanent care of the state. There was no peace till late in William III.'s reign; and by that time the method of voting men and money for the army annually had been introduced. In spite of this, strong pressure was put on William to disband the army altogether, and it was only with great difficulty that he induced Parliament, which saw things too exclusively from the point of view of constitutional checks on the crown, to assent to the retention of a small force. With the accession of Anne came the outbreak of the great European War of the Spanish Succession, and by the end of it the question was decided in favour of a standing army. Some of our present regiments bear on their colours the proud names of Marlborough's victories.

CHAPTER X

MARLBOROUGH

WITH the reign of William III. the military history of England entered on a new phase. Her continental wars had hitherto been, with trifling exceptions, connected with the claim of the English kings to the throne of France. Henceforth she took part in nearly every European war; and thanks to the restless energy of William III. and to the military genius of Marlborough, the part she played was a leading one from the first. It has been argued that England was wrong to concern herself with continental quarrels, when her real interests lay elsewhere, at sea, in North America, at a later date in India, and that she only weakened herself for protecting these interests by intervening in European affairs. Those who take this view leave out of account the essential facts which governed the action of England at the time of this new departure. She had recently expelled her legitimate king, who had still many partisans at home, and who found in France a ready and most powerful ally. Louis XIV. was bound to the Stuarts by every tie of sympathy, religious, political, personal: and though he was not the man to let his sentiments outweigh his interest, the two so far coincided that his schemes for domination in Europe would obviously be furthered by weakening England through civil dissension. The English nation as a whole was passionately attached to its church, to its political liberties, still more perhaps to its independence of foreigners, and saw in France the one dangerous enemy to all three. France had other enemies, arrayed against her for reasons which did not much concern England, and alliance with them was an opportunity worth

seizing. The determining motive however was not this calculation, but outraged honour. When Louis XIV. formally recognised the son of the dying James II. as lawful king of England, he committed at once a crime and a blunder: he deliberately broke his word, and insulted England beyond endurance. Those words cost him his supremacy in Europe, and made England henceforth a permanent and ever weightier factor in European affairs.

The military reputation of England had suffered eclipse since the days of Henry V., not altogether deservedly, for the fighting qualities of Englishmen had been conspicuous on many fields, and yet not unnaturally. English troops fighting for the independence of the Netherlands had done excellent service; Cromwell's contingent allied with France in 1658 had mainly contributed to an important victory over Spain. But the few independent expeditions sent by the English government to the continent had been ill managed or ill commanded, and had failed more or less completely. Under William III. they showed all their ancient stubborn valour, but luck was against them. The defeats of Steinkirk and Landen were more glorious to the English infantry than many a victory: the misconduct of their allies in one case, the very superior numbers of the French army and the great skill of its commander in the other case, amply accounted for the failure, but still they were defeats. The great victories of Marlborough, almost as brilliant as Crecy or Agincourt, restored the military credit of England, again not quite deservedly, for the armies of Marlborough were by no means wholly English, and yet very naturally, since the great Englishman was the real conqueror of Louis XIV. The death of William III., just before war actually broke out, left Marlborough, who was all powerful with queen Anne, the real head of the coalition against France.

England thus entered on the war of the Spanish Succession as the ally of continental powers banded together against France, and hampered by having to act in concert with them, as well as supported by their strength. In the patient tact requisite for managing a body of allies with diverging interests, and practically no bond of union except hostility to the enemy, Marlborough was perhaps

never excelled. In military skill he was vastly William's superior, being on the whole the first of an age fertile in good generals. The weak point in his position was that it depended on the personal favour of a stupid woman: when his wife lost her influence over queen Anne, his political antagonists in England found no great difficulty in bringing about his disgrace. Marlborough was not a good man; he was greedy of money and of power, and unscrupulous as to the means he adopted for gaining them. As a general however he had the virtues never too common, and almost unknown in his age, of humanity towards the peaceful population even of a hostile country, and of attention to the welfare of his own soldiers. Like Wellington a century later, he was habitually careful of the lives of his men, though he knew how to expend them when the occasion demanded it. Like Wellington also he never lost his patience and coolness of judgment, either in the excitement of battle or in dealing with troublesome allies. In fact the two great Englishmen were conspicuously alike, at least in their military character, though there is no real doubt that Marlborough had the greater genius.

The commencement of the war was uneventful. The king of France had taken possession of Belgium in the name of his grandson Philip, the French claimant of the crown of Spain, which alarmed the Dutch for their homes. In Spain itself the French party was preponderant, but not unopposed. Louis had every motive for standing on the defensive. Marlborough was as yet powerless to move his allies. It was not until the alliance of Bavaria with France opened a road for French armies into the heart of Germany that decisive events occurred. The chief item in the French plans for 1704 was that Marshal Tallard should march from the Rhine into Bavaria, where another army under Marsin had wintered; then the two armies, combined with the Bavarian contingent, were to advance down the basin of the Danube. It was calculated that the Emperor, already greatly hampered by an insurrection in Hungary, would be unable to oppose effectual resistance, and would purchase peace on almost any terms. If this were achieved, the keystone of the alliance against France, the candidature of an Austrian prince in Spain, would be removed, and the

whole fabric might be expected to collapse. The plan was well conceived: it was an instance, on the great political scale, of acting upon the fundamental military maxim—strike at the vital point. But for Marlborough it must have succeeded, so far as anything can be safely predicted in war. But for the practice, invariable in that age and perhaps inevitable by reason of the badness of roads and of organised supply, that all military operations should be suspended during the winter half of the year, Marlborough would have had no time to prepare his counter stroke. His plan was indeed fully thought out before the winter, in concert with the imperial general Eugene of Savoy, but he had many obstacles to overcome before it could be carried into operation. Even to the English cabinet he did not venture to disclose his whole purpose, but he succeeded in obtaining a large addition to his own army, and increased money grants. The Dutch had but one idea, to guard their own frontier: they would not even assent beforehand to Marlborough's proposal, intended to conceal his real object from friend and foe alike, that he with part of the German contingents should operate against France from the Moselle, while the Dutch, with the rest of the Germans, defended the Netherlands. Marlborough was obliged to be content with the assurance of his one firm supporter in Holland, the Pensionary Heinsius, that consent should be obtained when the time came. Much trouble had also to be taken with other minor members of the confederacy, but Marlborough attained his ostensible object of being free to move with his own army to the Moselle.

Not until Marlborough with his army had reached Coblenz, did he give any hint of his intentions, except to the two or three persons necessarily in his confidence. Even then he only declared to the Dutch that he found it necessary to go further south; and they, finding that a deaf ear was turned to their remonstrances, let Marlborough take his own course, and even sent reinforcements after him. The distance to be traversed, the necessity of arranging every detail for troops moving by different routes, made his progress necessarily slow. The French did not in the least guess his design, but nevertheless persevered in their plan of reinforcing the army in Bavaria, a process which the

Margrave of Baden, who commanded for the allies on the upper Rhine, ought to have rendered much more difficult. Not till Marlborough, ascending the Neckar, began to penetrate the hill country that separates the basins of the Neckar and Danube, was his real purpose apparent. He had before then met Eugene of Savoy, who was as he hoped to command the imperial army destined to co-operate with him : but the Margrave of Baden, who was Eugene's senior in rank, insisted on taking the more important part, and leaving Eugene to command on the Rhine. Marlborough's purpose was something like Napoleon's at the beginning of the famous Austerlitz campaign, to concentrate his army, reaching the Danube by various routes, near Ulm. In Marlborough's time however Ulm was not yet an important fortress : and the Elector abandoned it on the allies appearing in the vicinity, and marched down the Danube to a great intrenched camp near Dillingen. Marlborough's first object was necessarily to secure a point of passage across the Danube : and he determined to seize Donauwerth, a small fortified town lower down. His zeal was quickened by the tidings that the French army under Marshal Tallard was on the point of marching from Strasburg to assist the Elector. He therefore, as soon as his troops had come up in sufficient numbers, without waiting for full concentration, circled round Dillingen, and directed his march on Donauwerth. The Elector divined his intention, and occupying that town, with the hill of the Schellenberg adjoining it, began to put in order the fortifications. Marlborough saw the urgent necessity for haste : a couple of days' delay might render the works on the Schellenberg unassailable, in which case his chance of securing a bridge over the Danube before Tallard arrived would be but small. He therefore ordered an attack immediately on reaching the place, though his men had had a very long march, and it was verging towards evening.¹

¹ The Margrave of Baden helped to drive Marlborough to this extreme haste : he had claimed the chief command on the junction of the armies, and had with difficulty been induced to agree that it should be exercised by himself and Marlborough on alternate days. The Margrave was far too cautious to storm the Schellenberg : Marlborough had therefore to attack that evening or to wait two days, which would have been too late.

Donauwerth stands on the north bank of the Danube, just below the junction of a tributary, the Wernitz. The Schellenberg, a large flat-topped hill, immediately adjoins the town on the east. A continuous line of works existed, passing along the brow of the hill, and extending to the fortifications of Donauwerth on one side and down to the Danube on the other; only the central portion however was in a state fit for defence, though the enemy was at work on the remainder. Marlborough arrived in person with his cavalry before Donauwerth on the forenoon of July 2. While waiting for the infantry to come up, he caused bridges to be thrown over the Wernitz, and ordered a site for a camp to be marked out, thus giving the enemy the impression that no attack was intended, at any rate until next day. At 6 p.m. however the pick of Marlborough's army assailed the hill: after a long and desperate struggle, in which the allies lost heavily, the enemy were routed, and fled down the reverse slope to the Danube. The crush broke down the bridge, and thousands were precipitated into the rapid stream. Scarcely more than a quarter of the defenders of the Schellenberg reached the Elector's camp. As a consequence of this defeat the Elector abandoned Donauwerth, as well as Dillingen, and retired to Augsburg, where he shut himself up, while Marlborough ravaged Bavaria, in the vain hope of compelling the Elector to abandon the French alliance. Nuremberg became the centre of Marlborough's supply system, which was elaborated in a manner far in advance of his age; and the devastation¹ of Bavaria made him even more dependent on his magazines than he would otherwise have been. As Tallard was now approaching from the Rhine, with a force that Eugene was powerless to stop, the allies found it necessary to abandon the southern bank of the Danube. Marlborough and Eugene persuaded the Margrave of Baden that to capture Ingolstadt, a fortified town lower down the river, would be a higher distinction than to await attack from the French. They themselves united their armies at Donauwerth on the

¹ This devastation is always regarded as a blot on Marlborough's fame, and is in marked contrast to his usual humanity. The practice was dying out, in obedience to the dictates of opinion, but it was not yet, as it would be now, an outrage on international usage.

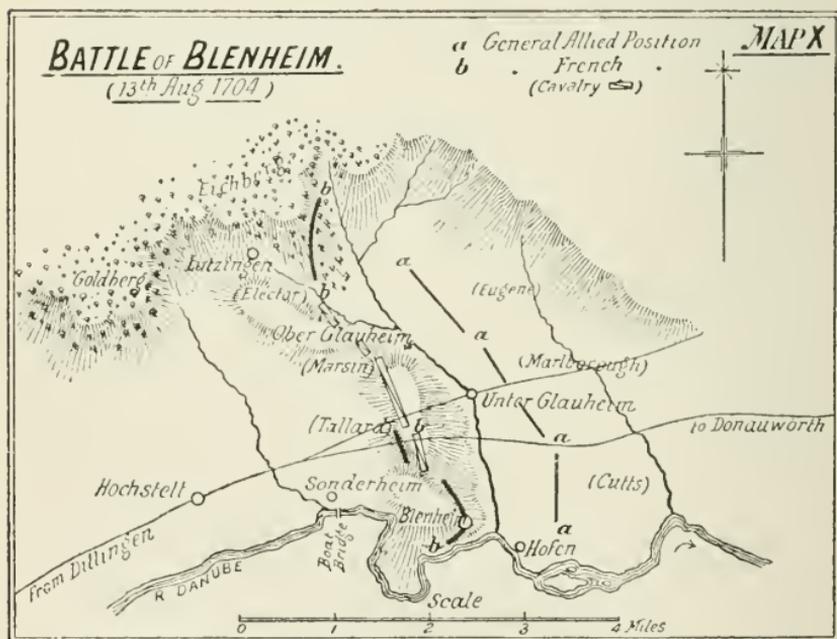
northern bank, and marched up the river towards the enemy, whom they found encamped beyond the Nebel, a small tributary of the Danube.

The line occupied by the French and Bavarians ran nearly north and south, and extended for about four miles. They had naturally formed their camp on the higher ground west of the Nebel, the course of which was marshy along the whole front, troublesome to cross everywhere, and believed by the French to be a much greater obstacle than it really was. Tallard, misconstruing information that he had received, was under the impression that Eugene's army had not joined Marlborough, and that therefore the movement before dawn on August 13, of which he was apprised, was a retreat northwards. The body of cavalry which escorted the allied generals to the Nebel, when they rode in advance of their armies to reconnoitre, was supposed to be detached to cover this retreat. Nothing was further from the minds of the French generals than the expectation of being attacked where they were. Hence they had taken no steps, as they might easily have done, to render their front virtually unassailable. Hence also, when the morning fog cleared off, and discovered columns of infantry at the edge of the higher ground which bordered the valley of the Nebel on the east, they were in too great a hurry to do anything but form line of battle on the ground which they already occupied.

The Nebel emerges from the wooded uneven country to the northwards about a mile east of Luzingen, in which village were the Elector's head-quarters. A little lower down, also on the right bank of the stream, is the village of Oberglauheim. The infantry of the joint army, commanded by the Elector and Marshal Marsin, was drawn up from Luzingen to Oberglauheim, most of its cavalry on the right, extending further to the south. Marshal Tallard's infantry was most of it posted in Blenheim,¹ a village close to the Danube; his cavalry continued the line to the north till they met Marsin's, but had a reserve of infantry behind its centre. The artillery, which was not numerous in proportion, was distributed at intervals. The French appar-

¹ The village which gives its name to the battle is properly called Blindheim: but the spelling in the text has been adopted in English ever since Marlborough's day.

ently believed the Nebel to be impassable from Oberglauheim to Blenheim, where there were some mills on the stream, which however they neglected to occupy: nor had they effectually broken the bridge by which the high-road crosses the Nebel. About Unterglauheim, a hamlet on the left bank half-way between the two, there lies a wide piece of swamp. During a great part of the year, or after heavy rain, the Nebel might no doubt be a very serious obstacle, but in August the difficulty could be overcome. Their want



of care to ascertain the truth on this point was the direct cause of their defeat. Their dispositions had two ruinous defects, the Nebel being passable: first, their line was fatally weak in the centre, where for a long distance it consisted almost entirely of cavalry: secondly, they were posted so far back from the stream that there was room for the enemy to form line for attack after struggling through it. The latter error might easily have been remedied by a short advance, but nothing was done. Tallard, it is said,

uneasy about the weakness of the centre when he saw the enemy massing at Unterglauheim, urged Marsin to post his reserve of infantry there ; but Marsin thought, rightly as the event showed, that his reserves were needed on the left. Why Marshal Tallard did not withdraw from Blenheim several of the useless thousands that crowded it, is a question easier to ask than to answer.

Tallard had plenty of time to correct his dispositions, had he known how, for the battle did not begin for several hours after the allies came in sight. Eugene and Marlborough had agreed that the army of the former should constitute the right, Marlborough's the left, of the line of battle. As their line of march had been near the Danube, and the ground through which Eugene's columns had to make their way was broken and wooded, it was a long time before he was opposite Luzingen, ready to begin the action, and Marlborough was of course obliged to wait for him. The allied generals had discerned the defect in the French position : a vigorous attack on the centre ought to cut the line in half. Their plan was that Eugene should occupy the Elector and Marsin, and that Cutts with Marlborough's left should assail Blenheim directly, while the duke himself undertook the decisive movement. All preparations were duly made while Eugene was on the march : the pontoon train was brought up, and bridges laid at intervals from Unterglauheim downwards : the artillery was posted to command the opposite bank : troops were pushed forward to seize the small existing bridges near Blenheim. Except for a not very serious cannonade, Tallard remained inactive : he had in fact no longer any choice, unless he retreated (for which there was no reason), after he had allowed all the passages of the Nebel to fall into his enemy's hands. About one o'clock came the welcome news that Eugene had completed his march, and the battle began at once on both flanks. Of the conflict on the right very little need be said. The Nebel above Oberglauheim was not a real obstacle, and Eugene attacked directly. The contest was long and obstinate, with considerable vicissitudes : Eugene's troops, exhausted by the long march under a hot sun, were scarcely equal to the exertion required of them. The Elector and Marsin held their ground till Tallard was routed, and then

made an orderly retreat, but they could not spare a man to help their colleague. Eugene's share in the action, though not in itself successful, was a necessary and important contribution to the victory.

Cutts made his attack on Blenheim with all the fury which earned for him the nickname of the Salamander. Against the enormous force that was massed in the village it was scarcely possible that he should actually succeed, but he prevented any troops from being withdrawn towards the centre. Here also the vicissitudes of the action were great. The first line of English infantry advanced right up to the palisades covering the village before they fired a shot. While vainly trying to force their way through the defences they were suddenly charged in flank by some French cavalry, and would have been routed but for some Hessian cavalry, which drove back the enemy. A fierce and confused cavalry fight followed, into which was drawn every squadron that Cutts could command, but with no decisive result. Meanwhile Marlborough's centre had been slowly crossing the Nebel, covered by the artillery on the high ground east of the stream, which approached much nearer to it than on the French side. The passage was begun opposite Unterglauheim by the infantry of General Churchill, Marlborough's brother. As soon as they could begin to form on the further bank cavalry pushed across after them, and though charged by the first line of Tallard's cavalry, and driven back, they were rescued by the infantry, now fairly formed, and made good their position. As more and more cavalry crossed the Nebel they extended to the right towards Oberglauheim, which was held in force by the right of Marsin's army. His cavalry fully held their own, driving some of the Danish and Hanoverian squadrons back across the Nebel. The infantry of Marlborough's right now began to cross above Oberglauheim, but being promptly attacked by the French infantry out of that village, the Irish brigade conspicuous among them, suffered heavy loss, and would have been defeated, but for reinforcements brought up by Marlborough in person, which restored the balance.

The time was now come for Marlborough to deliver the decisive attack. His whole army was across the stream, and formed, the cavalry in two lines, the infantry in support

with intervals between the battalions, so that the squadrons if repulsed might pass through. His artillery, advanced to the Nebel, played upon the stationary French until the last moment. Tallard had done, could do, nothing to meet the coming storm, except to bring up his reserve infantry, nine battalions, and mingle them with his cavalry. About five o'clock the signal was given, and Marlborough led his horsemen, some 8000 strong, up the gentle slope to the French position. The first charge did not succeed, but some infantry and artillery, brought up in support, took up the action. The French did not venture to charge in their turn, though they had ample numbers for doing so: apparently the feebleness of Tallard was felt throughout his army, and so the last chance was thrown away. Marlborough's second charge completely broke the French cavalry: the infantry intermixed with them were cut to pieces or surrendered. Tallard in vain tried to re-form his cavalry, in order to cover the retreat of his infantry from Blerheim: they did not even stand another charge, but fled in confusion, some westwards, some towards the Danube. Detaching part of his force to pursue the former, Marlborough drove the latter upon the river. Tallard himself, with such of the fugitives as did not try to swim the Danube, was compelled to surrender. Meanwhile General Churchill, advancing in rear of the victorious cavalry, had encircled Blenheim, where nearly 12,000 French, mostly infantry, were still cooped up. After vain attempts to cut their way out, the whole mass surrendered: they had been utterly wasted by the mismanagement of their general.

It was the practice in Marlborough's day to count armies by the number of battalions and squadrons; and as those of course varied in strength, through casualties as well as through unequal original numbers, calculations based on them are a little uncertain. There is very fair agreement as to the battalions and squadrons engaged on both sides, from which it may be reasonably inferred that the allies had about 52,000 men (9000 only being English), of which nearly 20,000 were cavalry, and the French about 56,000, of whom perhaps 18,000 were cavalry. In artillery the French had a decided superiority. With this advantage, and with a position difficult to assail effectually, they ought

to have been well able to hold their own. The miserable tactics of Tallard however did more than throw away this advantage. The opinion has been expressed that 4000 men were amply sufficient to hold Blenheim: Tallard left 13,000 there all through the day. The difference, 9000, more than neutralised the French superiority in infantry, and left the allies their preponderance in cavalry. Moreover Eugene had apparently rather inferior forces to those immediately opposed to him. Thus Marlborough was able to carry out, to some extent at least, the cardinal maxim of bringing superior forces to bear at the decisive point.

As might be inferred from the severity of the fighting, the victory cost the allies dear, no less than 4500 killed and 7500 wounded. The French loss was enormous: fully a quarter of their army surrendered themselves prisoners, a still larger number were killed and wounded, or were drowned in attempting to pass the Danube. Their camp and nearly all their artillery fell into the hands of the victors. Roughly speaking it may be said that Tallard's army was annihilated: Marsin's, though it suffered severely, made good its retreat without being disorganised.

Without going so far as Sir E. Creasy, who ranks Blenheim among the fifteen decisive battles of the world, we may still say that its moral results were even more important than the heavy material blow inflicted on France. For half a century France had been much more than the first military nation in Europe. Thanks in the first place to Turenne, but also to the organising skill of Louvois and the engineering genius of Vauban, Louis XIV. had developed a power which, wielded as it was by a despot steadily bent on selfish aggrandisement, had been fully a match for coalition after coalition. A succession of great generals carried on the traditions of Turenne: they were pitted against enemies who on the whole were inferior in skill, in resources, above all in homogeneity. The world had almost come to believe in the natural and permanent military superiority of France, and to accept Louis XIV. on his own estimate of himself. The news of Blenheim broke the spell: the domination of France was over. Louis himself had to admit that he was mortal: during the remainder of the war he stood substantially on the defen-

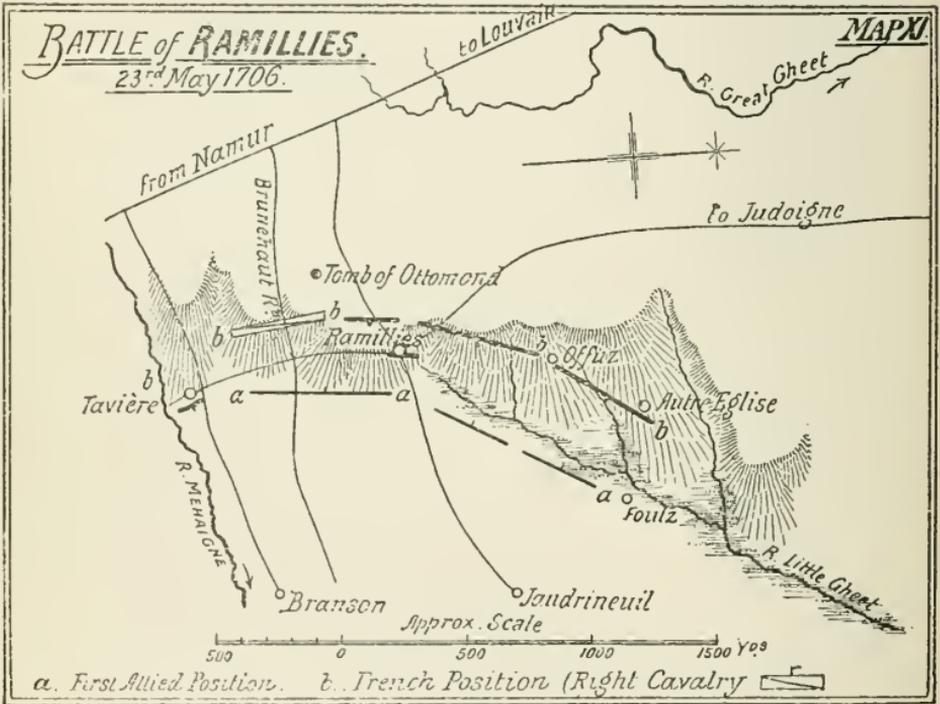
sive, trying to retain or to recover territories over which he or his grandson, the king of Spain, had some claim, but no longer dreaming of crushing his antagonists. The power of France was by no means broken as yet; thanks to the difficulties inherent in working a coalition, she held her ground for several years more, but the tide, which had turned at Blenheim, set on the whole steadily against her.

Believing France to be more exhausted than she in fact was, Marlborough hoped to achieve great things in 1705 by attacking France from the side of the Moselle. The reluctance of his allies however kept his army so small that he was powerless. Villars, the ablest living French general, was opposed to him with superior forces, and with orders to avoid a battle. After vainly trying for six weeks to find an opportunity—a direct attack on Villars in an intrenched position being beyond his strength—Marlborough returned to the Netherlands, where the incapable Villeroy lay behind a great line of almost continuous fortifications from Antwerp to Namur. It was the fashion of the age to construct these elaborate defences, always open to two fatal objections, that they deprived the army holding them of all mobility, and that they became useless if broken through at any point. So long as the enemy was content to play the game in the fashion that best suited the defence, or was so hindered by bad roads and lack of subsistence that he found it difficult to move promptly, such lines might serve their purpose; and if from the nature of the country they could not be turned, an enemy might deem it too hazardous to break through them. But from Turenne onwards skilful generals turned or pierced them whenever they seriously tried; and Marlborough's easy success in breaking through the French lines at what was deemed their strongest point was a very striking proof of their inutility.¹ Had it not

¹ The famous lines of Torres Vedras are the only instance in more modern times of such a method of defence proving successful, and they could not, from the nature of the case, be turned, and were never assailed. The system on which the eastern frontier of France is now defended is an instance of the same thing on the greatest possible scale. There the flanks abut on neutral countries, and cannot therefore be turned without violating the neutrality of either Belgium or Switzerland. What it would cost to break through such a line cannot be calculated, for it would depend on the effect, as yet untried, of modern

been for the persistent opposition of the Dutch to any decisive action, Marlborough, advancing on Brussels, would have fought a great battle very nearly on the field of Waterloo. Hampered by the Dutch, he could achieve nothing; and the year 1705, though eventful in other parts of the vast theatre of war, ended in the Netherlands much as it began.

The next year Marlborough formed a plan even more



far reaching and audacious than that which had been brought to so triumphant a conclusion on the field of Blenheim. The French in northern Italy had been pressing their enemies hard: well led by Vendôme, they had

scientific developments in explosives, electric communication and the like: but it can hardly be doubted that it could be done, if the assailant were willing to pay the price.

gone very near to conquering Piedmont entirely. Marlborough dreamed of marching his own army down into Italy, and relieving the duke of Savoy. Fortunately perhaps for his fame, he found the obstacles insurmountable, and remained in the Netherlands,¹ where the incapable Villeroi soon played into his hands. Believing that Marlborough's army was not yet concentrated, and that therefore he could fight a battle to advantage, Villeroi moved from his intrenched camp at Louvain in the direction of Liège, not far from which city were Marlborough's head-quarters. As a matter of fact, Marlborough was not only ready for action, but slightly superior in numbers to Villeroi, and he promptly moved towards the sources of the two small rivers known as the great and little Gheet, in order that Villeroi might not protect himself behind them, if he discovered that he had no chance of fighting with the weight of numbers on his side. Villeroi however was in no way desirous of avoiding a battle, and took up a position facing eastwards, near the source of the little Gheet.

The field of Ramillies is the highest ground in Brabant, and, as is apt to be the case in flat countries where the fall of the ground is extremely gradual, there was a great deal of morass, in some places impassable. Immediately at the source of the little Gheet is the small village of Ramillies; about two miles to the north of it lies another village, Autre Eglise, on the west of the stream, the whole course of which, so far, is very marshy. Just south of Ramillies runs from east to west an old Roman road known as Brunehaut's road, with the small river Mehaigne beyond it, and between the road and the Mehaigne, about south of Ramillies, is the village of Tavière. Villeroi's position was on the higher ground behind the little Gheet, whence the slope to the great Gheet, about two miles further west, is rather greater, and along which runs the road by which Villeroi had come from Judoigne on the great Gheet. His left was behind Autre Eglise, his centre behind Ramillies, his right on a barrow called the tomb of Ottomond, close above the Roman road, with a small force thrown forward into Tavière. The allied army, marching from the east, arrived in front of this position

¹ A map in which Marlborough's Belgian campaigns can be followed, will be found at p. 234.

about noon (May 23, 1706). Marlborough at once saw the opportunity which was afforded him by half of the French front being covered by the morasses of the little Gheet. The left was in fact almost, not quite, unassailable; but inasmuch as the road to Judoigne, Villeroi's most direct line of retreat, ran in rear of the left, this flank was, apart from the obstacle of the marshes, the one which it would be most advantageous for an enemy to attempt to turn. Hence Villeroi was easily led by demonstrations to strengthen his left wing. Marlborough on the other hand, secure that no counter-attack could be effectively made on his right through the marshes, could leave there only just troops enough to continue the demonstration, and mass nearly his whole force towards the left. The curve of the ground enabled him to do this unobserved by Villeroi, who had gone in person to his left wing, on the attack in that quarter being begun. The French were driven out of Tavière after a short struggle: then the Dutch and German cavalry charged the famous musketeers, who were posted nearly behind Tavière. They broke the first line, but being attacked by the second line when in the confusion of a successful charge, were driven back. Marlborough however came to their support, with the cavalry which he had withdrawn from the right wing; the musketeers were broken, outflanked, and driven in towards the centre, while the allies occupied the tomb of Ottomond, whence their guns could enfilade the whole French line. Meanwhile a fierce contest had been raging in the village of Ramillies. The French there held their ground, though unable to repulse the assailants, until taken in flank from the tomb of Ottomond. The battle was now virtually won: the whole of the French centre and right were crowded together in utter confusion. Villeroi in vain tried to form a new line, with his left still on Autre Eglise, thrown back nearly at a right angle to his former line. Such an attempt, desperate at best in face of a victorious enemy, was rendered entirely hopeless by the ground being blocked with the baggage and ammunition waggons. Some English troops, making their way as best they could through the swamps, assailed the French left behind Autre Eglise, and completed the rout. Seldom, in modern times, has a great victory been so cheaply purchased; the total of killed and

wounded on the side of the allies fell considerably short of 4000 men. The loss of the French was naturally greater : but the blow to them was far heavier than the figures would imply. They lost nearly all their artillery and baggage ; and most of the army was for the time dissolved into a mob of fugitives, among whom thousands of Walloons, unwilling soldiers at best, took the opportunity of dispersing to their homes. The French army, as at Vittoria, almost ceased for a while to exist as an army, and was even longer in being restored to efficiency. In the completeness of the disorganisation inflicted by defeat, Ramillies has perhaps no superior in modern times except Waterloo.

The victory of Ramillies was followed by the immediate occupation of the whole of Belgium. The great inland cities opened their gates as the defeated French withdrew ; both Antwerp and Ostend surrendered without serious resistance. Nothing of importance was left in French hands except the two fortresses of Mons and Namur. So severely was the blow felt that Vendôme was withdrawn from Italy to take the command against Marlborough, with the result that prince Eugene won a great victory at Turin over Vendôme's incapable successors, and drove the French entirely beyond the Alps: In Spain also the allies met with considerable success. Louis XIV., knowing how exhausted France was becoming, offered terms of peace, which were rejected, not altogether unreasonably, though in the event unfortunately, for in 1707 the tide turned back again. The French won the battle of Almanza, which restored their ascendancy in Spain, a battle noteworthy for the curious coincidence that the defeated army, partly English, was commanded by a French Huguenot noble who had entered the service of England, while the victors were commanded by an Englishman, James duke of Berwick, natural son of James II., who had shared his father's exile and entered the French service. Prince Eugene's attempt to invade the south of France from Piedmont failed. The lines of Stollhofen on the Rhine were forced by the French as easily as Marlborough had surprised the French lines in Belgium two years before, and the imperial troops suffered a defeat. The Dutch, deeply impressed by these disasters, would consent to no active measures : moreover in the administration of the Spanish

Netherlands, which had been entrusted provisionally to Dutch hands, they had rendered themselves highly unpopular. Thus, when in 1708 Vendôme, still in command, re-entered the provinces which Villeroy had been driven to evacuate, he was welcomed by Ghent and Bruges as a deliverer from their new masters.

When the campaign of 1708 opened, Marlborough was still waiting for his allies. His hope was that prince Eugene with an imperial army would come from the region of the Moselle to join him, and that in combination they would be able to complete the conquest of the Netherlands, if not to carry the war into France. The usual dilatoriness of Austria gave time for Vendôme to take the initiative. Having a secret understanding with French partisans in Ghent and Bruges, Vendôme began by threatening first Brussels, and then Louvain, so as to draw Marlborough to that neighbourhood, and then suddenly marching westwards, occupied the two great cities of the Scheldt region, and formed the siege of Oudenarde, in order to complete by its capture his hold on western Flanders. The alarm of the Dutch for their own safety was great, and instead of objecting to active measures, they were eager for a battle, though Marlborough without Eugene was inferior to the enemy in numbers. With great promptitude Marlborough seized a point of passage over the river Dender, which lay between him and the French, and which the latter had intended to employ as the line of defence for covering the siege. Foiled in this purpose by Marlborough's speed, the French generals¹ thought to avoid a battle by relinquishing for the present the siege of Oudenarde, and placing themselves behind the Scheldt. Again Marlborough was too quick for them: as the French were crossing that river on

¹ The duke of Burgundy was associated with Vendôme, in accordance with the vicious method which Louis XIV. frequently adopted. It was assumed that the young and inexperienced prince would be entirely guided by the veteran general: but it occasionally happened that the prince developed a will of his own, and then the veteran was helpless. How far Burgundy interfered before the battle, how far Vendôme's well-known sluggishness except in action was responsible for the French being thus surprised, is not quite clear: it will be seen that in the actual battle Burgundy, by his alternate hesitation and rashness, largely caused the French defeat.

the evening of July 11, they heard that Marlborough, after a march of almost incredible rapidity for that age, was between them and France, and was himself crossing the Scheldt close to Oudenarde. North of Oudenarde there is a sort of natural amphitheatre formed by somewhat higher ground extending in two curved lines, one of them passing close to the city, the other some three miles further off. The space between is, and was, cut up by hedgerows and patches of woods, and covered with small hamlets: hence the battle was much broken up into separate combats; moreover the artillery could find few available positions. Vendôme drew up his army along the side of this basin furthest from Oudenarde, with a detachment occupying a hamlet some distance in front. Cadogan, who commanded Marlborough's vanguard, did not hesitate to attack this force, though no supports were at the moment within reach, in order to gain time for the main body to cross the Scheldt behind him. As often happens, apparent rashness was in reality the most prudent course. Cadogan would have been destroyed if the French had brought their overwhelming numbers to bear on him, whether he attacked or stood on the defensive: but the bolder his attitude, the less likely they were to discover his real weakness, and the more time there would be for the main army to form behind him. After an obstinate struggle, in which prince George of Hanover, afterwards George II., distinguished himself at the head of some Hanoverian cavalry, Cadogan succeeded in forcing back the French advanced guard, which Burgundy, then in a timid mood, would not allow to be reinforced. By the time Marlborough's army was in order of battle, Burgundy had gone to the other extreme, and ordered an advance, without consulting Vendôme, which rendered a general action inevitable. Marlborough's troops had already done a very severe day's work, and possibly he might not have ventured to attack the French standing on the defensive: but Burgundy decided the question for him. Having thrown away, by timidity, the chance of overwhelming Cadogan, and the chance of attacking Marlborough while his army was still crossing the Scheldt, Burgundy now threw away by hastiness the advantage of compelling Marlborough's tired troops to attack a fairly strong position.

Prince Eugene had come in advance of his army, and Marlborough gave him the charge of his right wing, the Dutch general Overkirk commanding the left. At first the French gained some advantage, but Burgundy, finding obstacles to pushing forward his left, ordered that portion of his line to intrench their position, and merely hold their ground, an error by which Marlborough immediately profited. While Eugene, with some cavalry, held the French left in check, Marlborough was able to bring severe pressure to bear on the remainder of the French line, and at the same time to outflank their right. The broken nature of the ground rendered it impossible for the French generals to discern clearly what was happening: when night fell their centre and right were almost surrounded, but the darkness enabled them to escape from being compelled to lay down their arms, and the exhaustion of the victors, who had fought a long battle after an extremely long march, rendered close pursuit impossible. Nevertheless 10,000 prisoners were taken, which with the losses in the action reduced the French to a condition of complete inactivity. Their retreat had from the nature of the case been to the northwards, and though they were able to take up a safe position between Ghent and Bruges, yet they could do nothing to guard the French frontier, which lay open to attack.

Soon after the battle Eugene's army arrived, and the two generals, instead of waiting to recover Ghent and Bruges, resolved on carrying the war into France. The great fortress of Lille, deemed the masterpiece of Vauban, barred the way, and the losses of Oudenarde had been made good to the French army. Marlborough, who had learned under Turenne that it was not necessary to follow the traditional routine of the age, and take every fortress before advancing further, if it was feasible to mask it, desired to apply this principle to Lille. Even Eugene however shrunk from so audacious a proceeding, which would have been ruinous if unsuccessful: and the siege of Lille was therefore undertaken by Eugene while Marlborough covered the siege. The transport of siege train, ammunition, and supplies requisite for besieging a fortress large enough to contain a garrison of 15,000 men, was for that age a task of enormous

difficulty: the French still holding part of Flanders, it was necessary to bring everything from Ostend, the naval strength of Great Britain making it a matter of certainty that all could be landed there. All difficulties were however overcome, though a severe action had to be fought at Wynendael to prevent the French from intercepting one important convoy,¹ and before the end of 1708 the first great conquest of Louis XIV. had been taken from him. Again the French made proposals for peace, and would have agreed to very unfavourable terms. But the allies demanded that Louis should go the length of compelling his grandson to relinquish the throne of Spain, in which country the arms of France were in the ascendant, and the general feeling of the nation was favourable to the French claimant of the crown. Marlborough has been blamed for this, but apparently without reason: his own personal advantage lay in continuing the war, and party hatred was ready to impute to him any baseness. The utmost that can be said against him, or the English government, in the matter is, that they did not insist on this demand being abandoned.

Rather than submit to this ignominy, Louis XIV. for the first time in his life appealed to the patriotism of his people, who responded zealously. Villars, the only French general of high repute whom Marlborough had not yet defeated, was placed in command, in spite of his being not unreasonably disliked at court. Villars was undeniably the ablest French soldier living, and fully justified the confidence somewhat tardily placed in him. Standing at first on the defensive, he waited till the allies advanced to besiege Mons, the capital of Hainault, which now that Lille had fallen was the chief defence of the French frontier. He was unable to prevent them from forming the siege, but soon approached with a large army, in order if possible to relieve the place. Whether Villars would have attacked, if the allies had taken up a defensive position to cover the

¹ General Webb, who commanded the escort, beat off with great skill and courage a very superior force: Marlborough, who disliked Webb, in his despatches made so very little of this exploit, which in fact sealed the fate of Lille, that it was even said he had wilfully given Webb inadequate numbers, in order to expose him to destruction. Thackeray makes effective use of this in *Esmond*.

siege, may perhaps be doubted. Whether Marlborough was really guilty of fighting a great battle against his military judgment, in the hope of supporting by another victory his failing influence at home, may be doubted also. If Marlborough had had his way, he would have attacked Villars immediately on his arrival in the neighbourhood of Mons, without allowing time for him to strengthen his position; but he unfortunately yielded to Eugene's wish that approaching reinforcements should be waited for, and so enabled Villars thoroughly to intrench a position very strong by nature. On September 11, 1709, was fought the battle of Malplaquet, the last, the least creditable, and the most costly of all Marlborough's victories. It consisted mainly in a direct attack on the French army posted on a wooded ridge, their centre occupying the only gap in the woods. By sheer hard fighting the allies were just able to compel the enemy to abandon their position, but the French retired in perfect order, the victors gaining nothing but the battle-field, while their losses far exceeded those of the French. So frightful was the slaughter that public feeling in England blamed Marlborough for the losses incurred far more than it rejoiced in the victory. Not even the capture of Mons, which resulted from the failure of Villars' attempt to relieve it, atoned for what was described as the needless butchery of Malplaquet.

The rest of the war offers no features of interest. The Tories in England succeeded in gaining Anne's favour, and in overthrowing Marlborough, and they inclined to peace both because their great opponent had all the glory of the war, and also because the Jacobite sympathies of many of them disposed them favourably towards France, the mainstay of the Jacobite cause. Presently the Austrian claimant of the crown of Spain succeeded, by his brother's unexpected death, to the Empire, and to the whole Austrian dominions. This changed the whole situation, and fully justified the English government in seeking peace, though nothing could justify their conduct towards their allies. Thanks to political intrigues mainly, but partly also to his own faults of a non-military kind, the career of the greatest genius among English generals had a feeble and almost ignominious close.

INTERMEDIATE NOTE

LINE VERSUS COLUMN

The order of battle (*acies*) has always been in some sense a line, for a permanent and obvious reason. None but those who are in front can fight, and the natural desire is to encounter the enemy with as great strength as possible. What will be the depth of the formation must depend upon many considerations, among which the nature of the weapons of the period is the most obvious, though others, such as the training of the men and their national traditions, are far from unimportant. A body of men drawn up more than four deep could hardly however be called a line. Similarly the order of march (*agmen*) has always been the converse of the order of battle: four men abreast require a fairly wide road. It is not necessary that a whole army shall move by a single road, in modern times they do not. But until armies grew very large it was not needful that they should separate: until roads grew plentiful and maps were available it was not safe, unless where no collision with the enemy was possible.

The *acies* and *agmen* are then, in their simplest form, the same thing looked at from two different points of view. The thin line drawn up to face the enemy may be imagined turning to the right or left and marching off. Of course it is not meant to be implied that such, and such only, were actually the primitive methods. Just as a mechanical problem is solved by assuming the absence of friction, a condition which in fact can never be realised, and correcting the result afterwards on account of friction, so one may for the moment leave out of sight all subsidiary things, in order to bring out in its simplicity the fundamental idea of an order of battle. Historically, no doubt, by the time men had advanced far enough to comprehend the value of combining to form a line, they had attained also to diversity of weapons, which would tend at once to interfere with this bare simplicity. Every fresh change, especially the introduction of war-chariots or of horse-soldiers, would further complicate the *acies*. So too, as soon as an army carries anything with it, the simple idea of the *agmen* is encroached on. Nevertheless both *acies* and *agmen* are rooted, so to speak, in the nature of things: the former can be traced in every battle, the latter in every march.

Some of the departures from the principle of the line are rather apparent than real. A reserve is no exception, even when it becomes a whole second, or even third line: for the

reserve *ex hypothesi* is not fighting : when it is wanted to fight it is brought up to the front, and ceases to be in reserve. Foot-soldiers standing on the defensive, especially as against horse-men, present the largest amount of front in the safest way by forming a closed figure, the ring of the Northmen and of the Scots, or the familiar square of modern infantry in the days before the rifle. Nevertheless modifications are liable to be introduced, so to speak, from both sides. The order of battle is deepened, with the idea of giving greater impetus to a charge, from the weight of men behind backing up the front ranks. Epaminondas, using this device unexpectedly at Leuctra, defeated the Spartans, whose superior discipline and physique made them invincible so long as both sides used the same formation. His success led to the adoption of the Macedonian phalanx, and the abandonment of the line for the time being, until the Romans reverted successfully to the natural order. The order of march, for a real journey, cannot well be modified, because roads do not allow it. But for short marches, over open ground, there was much to be gained by massing men more closely together. They could hear orders better, and could be moved in any direction with more ease and precision. Hence arose the column, which is strictly speaking a series of short lines ranged one behind the other, and which, as military evolutions were developed, became the natural formation for manœuvring, as distinguished from fighting. Then obvious convenience would suggest keeping the troops as long as possible in the more handy formation of columns, even on the field of battle. Until the actual shock was impending, it was better to leave them so formed that they could be readily moved if necessary to another part of the field. Until artillery became really effective, the risk of increased loss, from cannon-balls passing through a solid body, instead of a line, was not very serious. Until the bayonet was introduced, the necessity for pikemen and musketeers acting together would tend to make deep formations, which are columns without their mobility, a virtual necessity. Thus in more ways than one column came to be regarded as the ordinary formation, line as the exception. And generals were led by the real convenience of mobility and facility of command, perhaps also by other calculations, to make attacks in column, with or without the intention of extending into line after the enemy's front had been pierced.

No words are required to show that troops armed with the short-range musket and bayonet, fighting against opponents similarly armed, are more effective in proportion as their depth can be safely reduced. More men can fire on the enemy, fewer are liable to be hit by the hostile bullets. This holds good alike for attack and for defence, and is indeed so obvious that when

one finds great masters of the art of war adopting the column as the formation for attack, one begins to look for some latent flaw in the reasoning. There is none however from the material point of view : the real or supposed advantage of the column is moral only. When a mass of men formed in a deep column advances to attack a line, the front ranks of the column have the (imaginary) support of the ranks behind them. The imagination of the line is meant to be impressed by the spectacle of the heavy mass about to impinge on it. Both notions are really baseless : the line has no assailants except the front ranks of the column, who not only are not helped by those behind, but become the targets for the concentrated fire of the line. But imagination is a very real force in war, as in other human affairs : the generals who have formed heavy columns for attack, need not be supposed to have made a gross blunder : they may have adopted the method best suited to the qualities and traditions of their men. All that can fairly be concluded is that the line is enormously more effective for those who can bear the strain. And England may be congratulated alike on having the requisite toughness of material, and on having had generals who knew how to utilise it.

From the beginning of English history, as the foregoing pages have shown, the English modes of fighting have always led to the adoption of a thin line. Harold's house-carls must have stood in a single rank. The archers of Crecy cannot have been in more than two. The dismounted men-at-arms were drawn up, we are told on one or two occasions, four deep : and seeing that they had to sustain the momentum of mailed horsemen charging, they could not well have had less. The bodily strength and toughness of the English race, perhaps their lack of imagination, qualified them to bear the shock of battle well : and the habit of victory engendered a confidence of superiority, which was doubtless arrogant, but was also calculated to realise the expectation. Thus the national qualities and traditions were favourable to the adoption in later ages of a thinner line than other nations saw their way to employ.

The evidence of the drill books seems to be clear that in England the fighting formation in the seventeenth century was three deep, that in the war of American Independence the practice of skirmishing in two ranks began, and that in the Peninsula the formation in two ranks for all fighting was finally adopted. A thinner line still is to all intents and purposes impossible. Whether the adoption of this system was the carrying out in full of the fundamental theory of the line, namely that it is the mode in which the largest proportion of force can be brought to bear on the enemy at once, or was suggested by virtual necessity, it is hard to tell. Given two very unequal

forces opposed to each other, it is obvious that the smaller can form an order of battle tolerably equal to the larger only by making its line very thin. It is also obvious that this can be done safely only if the men are not to be daunted by feeling the lack of support. These conditions existed, in extreme form, in the early English wars in India. The soldiers of Clive and Coote, whether English or sepoy, were infinitely superior in discipline and equipment, if not in courage, to their enemies, and they were outnumbered many times over. It is quite possible that the first impulse to the two-deep formation came from India. However this may be, it is certain that England, and England alone, adopted a century ago the line of two ranks only ; it seems to be also the case that at a much earlier period it was the English practice to fight in line, while other nations made more use of the column. And it is certain too that England gained enormously by being able to do so. The whole Peninsular war forms a commentary on this text, with Waterloo for a crowning lesson.

CHAPTER XI

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE peace of Utrecht left England in the very front rank of European powers, bound by treaty obligations to maintain the settlement then made, and taught by many victories to assume that her intervention would be effective. Moreover a new influence tended in the same direction : her kings had through their Hanoverian dominions a personal interest in continental affairs, and naturally tried to obtain English support in Hanoverian quarrels. Naturally also France was permanently jealous of the power which had destroyed her dream of naval supremacy, and had played the leading part in humbling Louis XIV. Thus it was to be expected that England would be involved more or less in most European wars, and also that she would habitually have France as her antagonist. She had private troubles in addition, in the shape of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 and the revolt of the American colonies. The former could hardly have taken place had England not been at war with France : the latter succeeded very largely because France and the other European opponents of England seized the opportunity to coalesce against her. France and England were in truth pitted against each other all the world over. In North America they began the rivalry of the eighteenth century on fairly equal terms, so far as that continent was concerned. But the naval and commercial superiority of Great Britain, which grew more and more pronounced as time passed, insured her ultimate triumph in America in spite of all that France could do ; while nearer home England found her advantage in supporting with money and men the continental enemies of her rival.

Nevertheless nearly thirty years elapsed after the peace of Utrecht before England again sent an army to the continent. At first temporary considerations led the governments of George I. and the regent Orleans, threatened by similar dangers at home, to act in concert abroad. A little later Walpole came into power, and his chief aim was the maintenance of peace, in order that the new dynasty might have time to take root. During this period of peace the army lost the efficiency which Marlborough had given it. Political corruption undermined every department of the public service. The traditional jealousy of the existence of a standing army exhibited itself in the form of cutting down the numbers, and neglecting the equipment, of the army which was still kept in existence. The officers, who owed their rank to money or court favour, trained neither themselves nor their men. The only thing which saved England from disgrace in battle after battle was the stolid courage which never knows when it is beaten. This is to all appearance a national characteristic: in other words it is a quality found in most Englishmen, developed in them by the unconscious influence of race, of tradition, of we know not what, but not the outcome of conscious and deliberate training. English soldiers might have incompetent leaders, be ill-supported by their allies, be even placed under foreign generals because the government could find no competent Englishman to command. In spite of every discouragement they exhibited time after time the same obstinate valour, and on the distant battle-fields of India, where the good fortune of England brought men like Clive and Coote to the front, they accomplished feats worthy to rank with the greatest achievements of the Black Prince or Marlborough.

When the war of the Austrian Succession broke out, a strong feeling arose in England in favour of Maria Theresa, who was being deprived by a league of European powers of rights which they had all solemnly bound themselves to maintain. France was her chief enemy, and this doubtless quickened English zeal, though it was not until many months after an army largely English, under George II. in person, had won a victory which drove the French out of Germany, that war was formally declared by France. For

two years both English and French had been nominally acting only as auxiliaries to their respective German allies. The battle of Dettingen (June 27, 1743), the last in which an English king has taken part, was not creditable to the skill of either party. The Anglo-Austrian army, in attempting a bold stroke, allowed itself to be so shut in by a very superior French force that its surrender seemed almost inevitable. Mismanagement on the French side brought on a battle under conditions which neutralised this advantage; and they were badly defeated, though the allies, content with rescue from their perilous position, did not press the pursuit.

Two years later (May 11, 1745) the English contingent played a distinguished part in the bloody battle of Fontenoy, fought in the hope of raising the siege of Tournay. The task was almost hopeless, for Marshal Saxe with superior numbers occupied a strong intrenched position, and the allies not only had no general comparable to Saxe, but were not even under the real command of any one. The duke of Cumberland, son of George II., was nominal commander-in-chief by virtue of his rank, but he had practically no authority over his Austrian and Dutch colleagues. The idea of the battle was of mediæval simplicity, direct attack all along the line. The Austrians and Dutch could make no impression on the French right: Cumberland, after more than one unsuccessful attack on their left, formed most part of his British and Hanoverian infantry into a single heavy column 14,000 strong, which broke through the left centre of the hostile line, bearing down all opposition, though suffering enormous loss. If Cumberland had been properly supported at the critical moment, a victory might have been won, but his colleagues would not stir; and his column had to retire under a heavy cannonade, and fiercely assailed in flank by the Irish troops in the French service. They left 4000 dead behind them, but their ranks remained unbroken, and the cavalry ultimately was able to cover an orderly retreat.

The most noteworthy fact about Fontenoy is that on that day the English infantry was led to attack in column, instead of in line. It was very natural that Cumberland should do so under the circumstances; English military

science was at a low ebb, and he might well suppose that the methods of the continent were superior. His previous efforts, apparently made in line, had been foiled: it was most natural, since his obstinate courage refused to accept failure as his allies were doing, that he should try another formation. The attack in column was up to a certain point successful, but it would be rash to infer that therefore the column was preferable. The movement of retreat was made under every condition calculated to demoralise soldiers, frightful losses in their own ranks, inability to strike at the enemy in return, refusal of their allies to support them. Troops capable of maintaining their formation with perfect steadiness under such a trial were capable of anything. An attack made by them in line, pressed home with equal determination, would have been quite as likely to succeed, would have cost the enemy more, and themselves much less.

The Jacobite rebellion of 1745, which involved the last fighting that has taken place on British soil, is chiefly remembered because of the romantic interest in the Stuart cause created more than half a century later by the genius of Sir Walter Scott. In the home of their race the Stuarts aroused much chivalrous loyalty, though never was a noble sentiment wasted on more unworthy objects. The advance into England can plausibly be described as a piece of brilliant daring, which went very near to being rewarded with success: but it is perfectly obvious that no other policy offered the remotest chance of succeeding, and equally certain, though perhaps less obvious, that failure was always inevitable. England seemed indifferent: Jacobite zeal was almost dead, and the feeling toward the house of Hanover had not risen above passive acquiescence. Still the apathy was largely superficial: the panic in London, when it was known that the Highlanders were in Derbyshire, is a grotesque proof of this. If the English nation had ever seriously believed that there was a probability of a Roman Catholic king, backed by the strong favour of France, mounting the throne, the chances of the Pretender would have vanished in a moment.

The battles fought during the rebellion, small as they were, point with some force more than one military lesson.

At Preston Pans the disgraceful panic flight of the English cavalry left the infantry exposed without support, and with both flanks uncovered, to the sudden rush of the Highlanders. Armed with clumsy muskets which required so long to load that they had no time to deliver a second volley, and with bayonets slow and awkward to fix, they were practically unarmed against the onset of brave men armed in a manner most effective at close quarters. It was no wonder that they imitated the dragoons and took to flight, though with more excuse. At Falkirk General Hawley, grossly incompetent and careless, allowed his army to be surprised: the Jacobites, well handled, and having the further fortune of being able to attack while wind and rain were blinding the enemy, gained a well-deserved victory. At Culloden (April 16, 1746) the Jacobite bubble finally burst. The duke of Cumberland understood his business, and had in his favour superior numbers, and more efficient artillery. The rebels, half starving, had no choice but to fight or disperse. Unable to bear the fire of Cumberland's guns, which instead of being massed were distributed along the front line, two in each interval between regiments, the Highlanders of the right and centre charged desperately home. In spite of Cumberland's ingenious order that his men should thrust with the bayonet each at the enemy to his right, so as to avoid the Highland targets, they succeeded in breaking the front line. The second line however received them with a crushing fire which drove them back in utter rout. The Macdonalds on the left had hung back, sulky at being refused their traditional post on the right: but this only made the difference that a few less fell on both sides. Against discipline and steadiness they had never had a chance of victory.

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748, put an end to the European war, and made formal peace between England and France. The differences between the two great rivals outside Europe were however in no way removed: it can scarcely be said that in India or America the peace was ever more than nominal. The French attempt to connect their possessions in Canada with Louisiana gave the English colonies no option but armed resistance, unless they were prepared to abandon all prospect of extension westwards.

For some time the contest was carried on in the region of the Ohio, without involving a formal breach between the two nations. In 1756 however, a coalition was formed between Austria, France, Russia, and Saxony for the dismemberment of the Prussian monarchy, which had risen to considerable power under Frederick the Great. Great Britain naturally allied herself with the enemy of France, and English subsidies were of great value to Frederick in his skilful and substantially successful resistance to enormous odds. The part taken by English arms in the war in Germany was not very important. The duke of Cumberland's blundering campaign, which ended in the convention of Closterseven, was made with Hanoverian and other German troops. More than one expedition against the French coast proved practically abortive. In 1759 however British troops had a conspicuous share in the important victory of Minden.

Marshal Contades with a French army of about 45,000 men held Minden, which is situated on the left bank of the Weser, just below the junction of a small tributary, the Wastau. On the approach of Ferdinand of Brunswick with a slightly inferior army, mainly German, but including six regiments of British infantry and some cavalry, Contades determined to give him battle. Accordingly during the night of July 31 he crossed the Wastau, over which he had constructed several bridges, his camp having been hitherto on the south of it, and formed in order of battle two or three miles north and west of Minden, with the left resting on the village of Hahlen, the right extending to the Weser. His own immediate command, about two-thirds of the whole, faced nearly north-west; and for a very inadequate reason his cavalry was massed in the centre, the infantry on the wings, the artillery being as then usual distributed along the front. The duke of Broglie's command, which had hitherto been acting separately, formed the right of the army, at an angle to Contades' line, facing northwards. Prince Ferdinand, advancing also before day-break, placed his army on an arc corresponding to the French, but necessarily somewhat longer, and therefore, as his numbers were less, in decidedly less dense formation. Contades' plan of battle was that Broglie should begin the action by attacking Ferdinand's left wing, and after driving it off, should turn and

take the German centre in flank, while he himself attacked it in front. Broglie's opening cannonade however made no impression on the enemy, and he had to content himself with holding his ground. Prince Ferdinand's army was drawn up in a more rational fashion. On his extreme right was a mass of cavalry, under Lord George Sackville the English general: and another body of cavalry faced the immediate right of Contades, while the space between was filled by infantry in two lines, with guns at intervals. A detachment sent forward to drive the French out of Hahlen, in order to clear the way for the artillery to advance, had not yet succeeded in its task, when the English regiments, which formed the right of the infantry line, began to advance. Ferdinand had not intended this, some order seems to have been misunderstood; but the advance once begun could not be checked. Supported by some Hanoverian regiments, the British marched in line, as if on parade, towards the left centre of the French, regardless of the fire poured on them by two batteries, one on each flank. The first line of the French, here entirely cavalry, attacked them in vain: but their continued advance exposed them to flanking fire from the infantry of the French left. Prince Ferdinand sent repeated orders to Lord George Sackville to bring forward his cavalry, and take some of the pressure off the infantry; but he remained obstinately inactive. Had he obeyed orders, the victory would have been decisive and complete: the whole French army must apparently have been driven into the Weser. Charge after charge was delivered upon the English, rather ill combined, with the result that the whole of the splendid French cavalry was completely defeated, and driven off the field, with a loss of 1700 men.

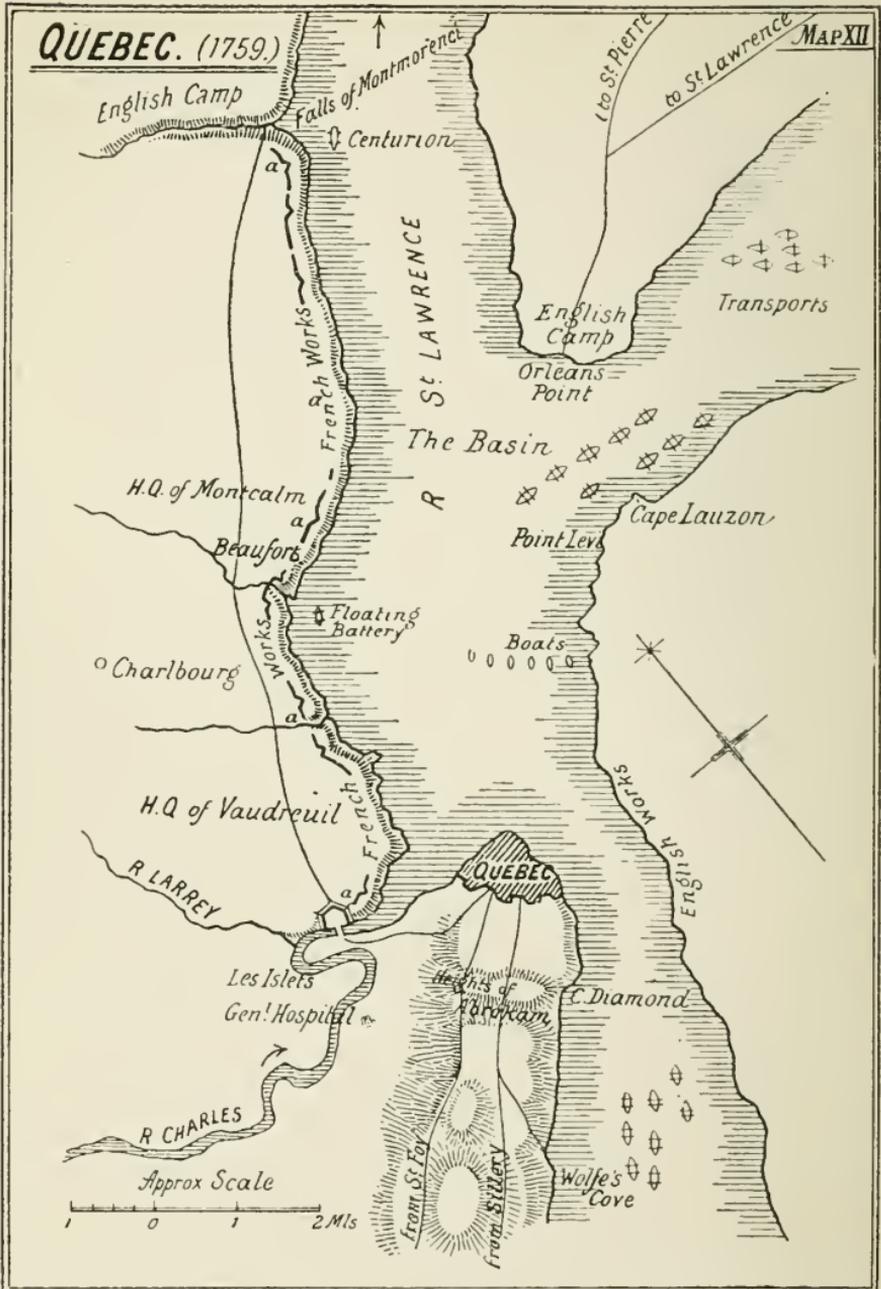
Meanwhile the action had been better sustained on Contades' right; but the defeat of his centre involved the retreat of his whole army. Covered by Broglie's corps, which had not been seriously engaged, the French retired on their bridges, and succeeded in crossing the Wastau, not without sustaining additional losses from the British artillery, which was boldly and skilfully pressed forward as the French left gave way. Broglie made good his retreat into Minden, but not without losing a whole brigade, which was surrounded and had to surrender. The French loss was 7000 men, that

of the allies about 2600, of which half fell on the six English regiments, the 12th, 20th, 23rd, 25th, 37th, and 51st, which to this day bear the name of Minden on their colours. But for the English general, the result would have been like that of Friedland, the annihilation or surrender of the whole hostile army, except the few who might succeed in crossing a bridgeless river. Lord George Sackville's military career ended on that day, as well it might: a fortunate accession to property enabled him to enter political life under a new name, but it can hardly be said that the achievements of Lord George Germaine were much more distinguished in the arena of politics than those of his former self on the battlefield.

Almost simultaneously with Minden, occurred the brilliant capture of Quebec by Wolfe, which meant the conquest of Canada. Pitt, who knew how to select and to appreciate a capable man, chose Wolfe, who was only a colonel, to conduct the most difficult part of a complicated scheme for invading Canada. One force was to strike at Niagara, another was to move by way of Lake Champlain, the third was to go in ships up the St. Lawrence and assail the capital. Separated as these forces were by long distances, and opposed by the French in adequate numbers, they could not possibly act in close concert. It may suffice to say of the two expeditions which started by land from the territory of the colonies, that they were conducted in a steady methodical way, and achieved a fair amount of success. Their real importance lay in their distracting the councils of the French, and preventing Wolfe from being overwhelmed. Even as it was, Wolfe was enormously over-matched so far as mere numbers were concerned; but his troops if few were of excellent quality, whereas opposed to him were still fewer French regulars, the Canadian militia, for which he had a well-grounded contempt, forming the bulk of the army that held Quebec. There was some little delay, after Wolfe had reached Louisburg, before the expedition could set sail up the St. Lawrence. The French knew of his coming, and had made all possible preparations; but as time went on, they persuaded themselves that their enemy would not venture to attempt the dangerous navigation of the river. The English admiral, however,

QUEBEC. (1759.)

MAP XII



managed to secure pilots : some of his captains even scoffed at the difficulty, and piloted themselves. Without any accident, the whole English fleet passed up the tortuous channel, and landed Wolfe's army opposite Quebec. As the governor of the province wrote home to the French minister, "the enemy passed sixty ships of war where we hardly dared risk a vessel of a hundred tons."

Quebec stands facing eastwards down the St. Lawrence at the end of a long strip of high ground, which above Quebec is about a mile wide, with extremely steep descent both southwards to the river bank, and northwards to the plain through which the river St. Charles winds, to fall into the St. Lawrence beside Quebec. Seven or eight miles below the mouth of the St. Charles, on the north bank, is a narrow and deep ravine, into which the river Montmorenci tumbles in the celebrated falls. Between the two the ground is fairly flat, but high above the level of the river, which is edged by slopes too steep to be climbed except at a few spots. Along this shore the French general Montcalm, with the concurrence of the governor Vaudreuil, thought fit to encamp his army, and to line the whole bank with fortifications. He doubtless thought to crush the English fleet if it attempted to pass up : but as the river is there two or three miles wide, the ships passed to and fro as they pleased, and whenever it suited Wolfe's purpose gave the shore batteries and camp a very unpleasant time. Immediately under Quebec the St. Lawrence is but a mile wide, and the south bank forms a great curve known as Point Levi, immediately below which, separated from it by a deep inlet, and opposite the mouth of the Montmorenci, is a long stretch of low ground called the Isle of Orleans. Wolfe arrived before Quebec on June 26, without having encountered any opposition, and landed his forces on the Isle of Orleans. Montcalm had decided on the prudent course : he believed that he had made Quebec unassailable, and he calculated that by avoiding battle and simply standing on the defensive, he would compel the English, after expending their resources, to retreat baffled. He only omitted one element from his calculation, the perfect mobility given to Wolfe by the British ships. There were French vessels in the St. Lawrence, but very inferior in force to the English :

and they had been sent, with disastrous caution, far up the river for safety, and their crews withdrawn to aid in the defence of Quebec. Wolfe consequently could move his troops exactly as he pleased, to or from any part of either bank not actually occupied by the French, and they were powerless even to impede his movements. The only possible device open to the French was to attempt to destroy the fleet with fire-ships: this was tried more than once, but the English sailors on each occasion grappled the flaming masses, towed them ashore, and left them to burn themselves out innocuous.

Wolfe's first move was to occupy Point Levi, and erect batteries there, from which he could bombard the city. His next was to occupy the ground just east of the mouth of the Montmorenci, in the hope of being able to cross that stream higher up and attack the main French camp in rear. There was no real risk in dividing his army, assuming that the force on the north bank of the St. Lawrence was sufficiently large, for the detachments on the south bank were inaccessible to the French. On July 18, some ships ran past the batteries of Quebec, a feat which the French commanders had deemed impossible. Boats were dragged overland behind Point Levi, and launched on the river above. It became necessary to detach troops to guard the long line of cliffs extending for many miles above Quebec. Still Montcalm could not be brought to risk anything by a counter stroke: a direct attack on his camp seemed hopelessly rash, but there was apparently no alternative. On July 31 an attempt was made to scale the heights a little west of the Montmorenci, which failed: the over-eagerness of the detachment ordered to lead the attack spoiled what little chance there may have been, but success was hardly possible. Then Wolfe fell ill, and for weeks nothing was done. When he recovered, if it can be called recovery for an acute attack of a mortal disease to pass away, he turned his attention in earnest to the river above Quebec. Ship after ship ran the gauntlet of the batteries, and troops were pushed up the southern bank. A large French force under Bougainville had to be employed to guard, as best they could, the long line of cliffs on the opposite shore. Several attempts at landing were made, without achieving much except wearing

out the French troops with incessant marching to and fro, while the English, conveyed rapidly in boats, could threaten any point they pleased. Obviously however, it was one thing to land a party for a mere raid; it was far more difficult, under the conditions, to land the whole army, small as it was, and establish it on the high ground west of Quebec. Before he had seen the place, Wolfe had hoped to attack the city in this way: now, after proving that no other course was feasible, he reverted to this desperate venture.

When Wolfe evacuated his camp by the Montmorenci, taking the soldiers on ship-board, the natural hope of the French was that this step was preparatory to retreat. They knew, or thought they knew, that the English admiral was anxious to be gone, before the season was too far advanced. Nor could they understand the meaning of his taking the ships up the river: they believed the north bank, guarded as it was, to be unassailable. Wolfe however had fully resolved on making the attempt; his great anxiety was to be fit to lead in person, since he would not devolve on any one else the responsibility of probable failure. "I know perfectly well you cannot cure me," he said to his physician: "but pray make me up so that I may be without pain for a few days, and able to do my duty." After reconnoitring the whole shore carefully, he decided on trying to ascend at the spot now known as Wolfe's Cove, about a mile and a half above Quebec. By so doing he would compel Montcalm, who had of course ready access to the city across the mouth of the St. Charles, to choose between fighting a battle to save Quebec and being shut up in the city, already beginning to starve. It is true that he would have in his rear the considerable force under Bougainville, but he knew that his own troops were far superior in quality to most part of the French, and relied on being able to keep Bougainville at bay. After all, if the risk was great, the prize was great also, and the only alternative was to submit to total failure.

For several days the ships were allowed to drift up and down with the tide, while boats seemed to be looking for points of landing, and Bougainville's men were kept incessantly on the move. Every man that could be spared, without evacuating the necessary stations at Point Levi and the Isle of Orleans, was brought on board the vessels: even

then, the total did not reach 5000. At two a.m. on Sept. 13, the tide served, and the boats conveying the infantry who were to land dropped down the river, the other vessels following gradually. As they neared the chosen spot, they were challenged from a French post on the heights: an officer promptly replied in French, and the enemy, who were expecting some provision boats to steal down in the night, were satisfied. Fortune was favourable at the landing-place: the officer commanding the post above was negligent, and a regiment which ought to have been encamped on the plateau near at hand had been by mistake placed at some distance. The ascent was made without opposition, and before daylight Wolfe's little army, all infantry from the nature of the case, was safe on the plateau. A regiment was left to hold the landing-place, and another was pushed out to the rear to guard against the chance of attack from Bougainville. Thus the total force available for the actual battle was but 3600 men. As soon as there was light enough, Wolfe formed his line facing Quebec, about a mile from the city. English ships had been cannonading Montcalm's lines until after nightfall, and seeming to threaten a landing. When at daybreak Montcalm heard firing from above Quebec, he rode in that direction, caught sight of the red-coats on the plateau, and hastily ordered up all the troops that were within reach. By about ten o'clock the French also were in order of battle, and advanced to the attack. Two field-guns had by this time been dragged up from the landing-place; Montcalm had also obtained three from the citadel: but substantially it was a battle of infantry only, with everything to favour the English. Montcalm had not waited to bring up all possible force, and engaged with numbers little greater than Wolfe's, of by no means uniformly good quality. The English line had been long formed, and the men quietly halted in perfect order; the French advanced hastily, not in the best order. Wolfe waited till the enemy were within forty yards: then a volley along the whole line broke the attacking column to pieces. The English charged, and all was over. "As Wolfe led on his men he was struck first by one bullet, then by another, but still held on his way. A third pierced his breast and he fell. He was carried to the rear, and asked if he would have a surgeon.

‘There’s no need,’ he answered, ‘it’s all over with me.’ A moment after one of them cried out, ‘They run : see how they run.’ ‘Who run?’ Wolfe demanded, like a man roused from sleep. ‘The enemy, sir : egad, they give way everywhere.’ ‘Go, one of you, to Colonel Burton,’ returned the dying man ; ‘tell him to march Webb’s regiment down to Charles river, to cut off their retreat from the bridge.’ Then, turning on his side, he murmured, ‘Now God be praised, I will die in peace :’ and in a few moments his gallant soul had fled.”¹

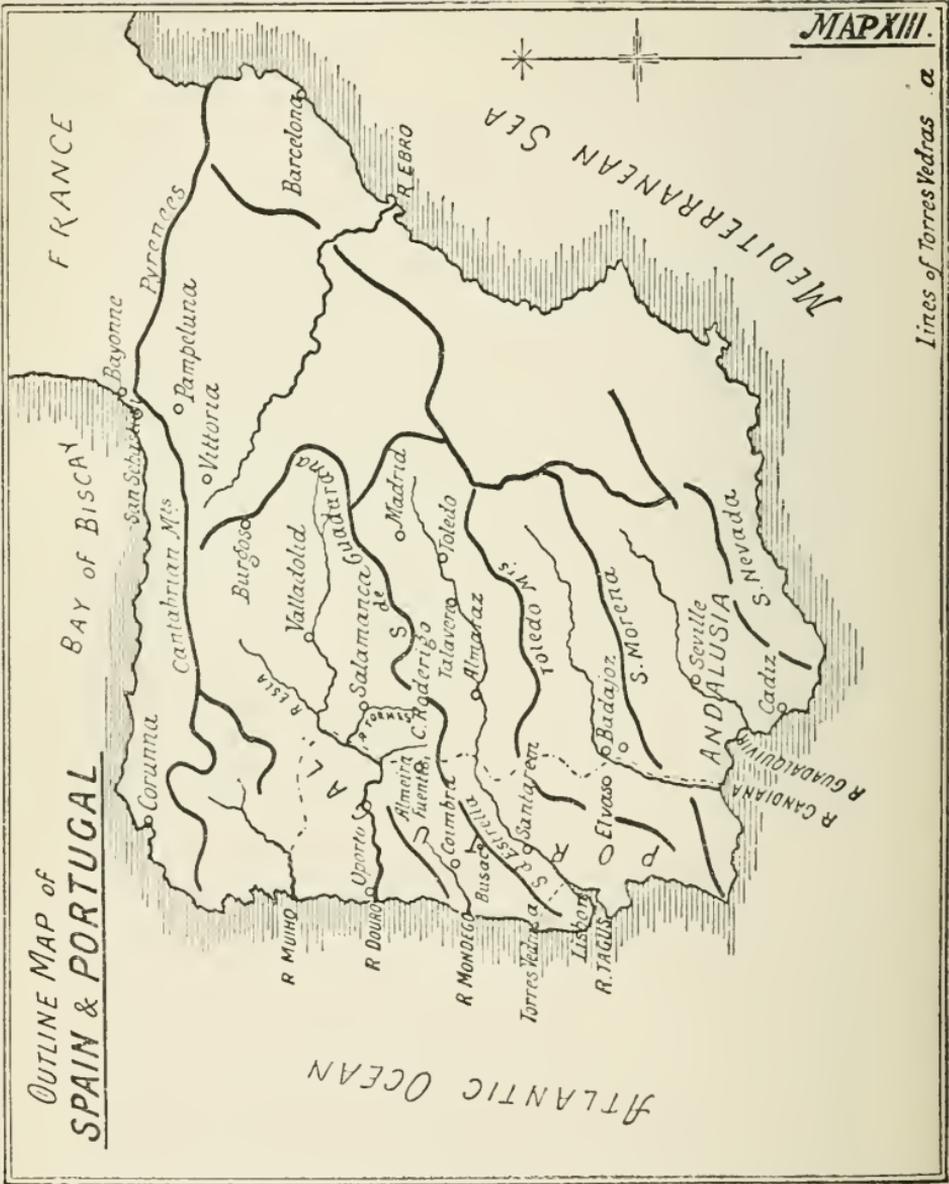
Montcalm was mortally wounded in the retreat, and there was no one to replace him. Total as the French defeat had been on the field, they had still at least double the English force, and Quebec was untaken. But despondent counsels prevailed, the city capitulated, and when peace came, France had to purchase it by surrendering her one great colony ; England was left mistress of North America. Well may Parkman say, “Measured by the numbers engaged, the battle of Quebec was but a heavy skirmish : measured by results, it was one of the great battles of the world.”

The operations before Quebec furnish an admirable illustration, on a small scale, of what sea power can do to render assistance to land warfare. The French were forced not only to watch, but to occupy, many miles of shore ; the English could post themselves where they pleased on the opposite bank in perfect security, and could move hither and thither when they desired it. They could cannonade from the water any portion of the French shore, and their enemies could never feel safe at any point against attack at any moment. The ships practically multiplied two or three-fold the little force at Wolfe’s disposal. Wolfe might grow sick at heart at seeing no opening for decisive action, his men might grow weary of delay, but they had no hardships to suffer. The French position was extraordinarily strong, and Montcalm steadily patient in giving his opponent no opportunity. Wolfe was obviously right in exhausting all other possibilities before trying a venture which if unsuc-

¹ This account of Wolfe’s death is quoted from Parkman’s *Montcalm and Wolfe*, on which most interesting work the foregoing narrative is based. There are several versions of Wolfe’s dying words, but Parkman, after comparing the evidence, accepts that given above.

cessful would have been fatal ; but when he did try it, his naval strength enabled him to do so with every chance in his favour which the situation allowed.

Of the war of American independence it does not enter into my plan to write. A detailed narrative would only ring the changes on two or three simple themes. Disciplined troops might be expected, unless grossly ill-commanded, to have the advantage over the colonists. The vast extent of the country made it impossible for the small British armies effectually to occupy more than isolated bits. The generals sent out from England were some of them incompetent, some neglectful, all face to face with a task beyond their strength. Washington, who held the chief control of the colonial forces, did his work with great skill and most admirable patience, and he was on the whole fortunate in his subordinates. Had not France intervened, the war might very probably have been much longer protracted. But when France and Spain and Holland had all joined in the war, the British navy was no longer dominant in the Atlantic ; supplies, reinforcements, communications generally, ceased to reach America with ease and certainty, and the case became hopeless. British credit was restored, to say the least, by the great naval victory of Rodney in the West Indies, and by the total failure of the French and Spaniards to make any impression on Gibraltar ; but the American colonies had none the less achieved their independence.



OUTLINE MAP of SPAIN & PORTUGAL

FRANCE

BAY OF BISCAY

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

ATLANTIC OCEAN

San Sebastian

Bayonne

Pyrenees

Pampeluna

Vitorria

Barcelona

LEBRO

Burgos

Valladolid

Salamanca

Madrid

Toledo

Almadaz

Toledo

S. MORETO

Seville

S. Nevada

Cadiz

Corunna

Oporto

Almeida

Fuente

Coimbra

Busaco

S. ESTRELLA

S. NITAREM

Torres Vedras

Lisbon

R. TAGUS

Elvas

Badajoz

R. DUERO

R. DUERO

R. MONTEGO

R. GUADALQUIVIR

CHAPTER XII

THE PENINSULA

PART I.—DEFENSIVE

THE French Revolution gave the signal for a long series of wars, in which France, thanks to the great military genius of Napoleon, got the better of all the nations of Europe, except England. At the end of the year 1807 Napoleon was at the height of his power; all central Europe was at his feet, and he had concluded with Russia the treaty of Tilsit, by which the two emperors agreed to support one another, at least passively, in further schemes of aggression. England alone was hostile, and England, though absolutely supreme at sea, was helpless on land, having not only no allies, but no field of action. Napoleon proceeded to give her both by his interference in the Spanish peninsula. First he made the Spanish government co-operate with him in a wolf-and-lamb quarrel with Portugal, occupied that little country with French troops, before whom the royal family fled to Brazil, and cheated Spain out of her share of the spoils. Then by a series of perfidious intrigues he insinuated a French army into the heart of Spain, got into his power the weak old king and his foolish heir, made them both renounce the Spanish crown, and ordered a few fugitive courtiers to salute his own brother Joseph as king of Spain. He knew that Spain had no trustworthy army; he had military possession of the capital, and took for granted that Spain would acquiesce. But the Spaniards, proud of past glories, intensely ignorant, and caring very little for the capital, where alone a few partisans of the new king could be found, broke out into insurrection everywhere. The French forces, which were but small, had to retire

behind the Ebro, one little army that had penetrated into Andalusia being actually surrounded and compelled to surrender. Simultaneously an English army landing in Portugal defeated the French at Vimiero, and obliged them to evacuate Portugal under a convention. Napoleon, more irritated than alarmed, poured vast armies into Spain, with the utmost ease defeated the Spanish levies that tried to stop him, and entered Madrid in triumph with his puppet brother in his train. Sir John Moore, who commanded the small English army in Portugal, made a brilliant march into the heart of Spain, threatening to cut Napoleon's communications with France; but he was far too weak to do more than trouble the emperor's repose. French forces of full double his numbers were sent to drive him into the sea, and succeeded, though Moore, turning to bay when he reached Corunna and found his ships not ready, inflicted on them a sharp repulse, of which his own life was the glorious price. Napoleon fondly dreamed that Spain was conquered, and returned to France, leaving Joseph as titular king, and several French armies to complete the work.

Had Spain been left unsupported, a real conquest would still have been impossible, so long as the endurance of the people lasted. The Spanish armies, if such they can be called, were defeated and dispersed in fifty battles. Their generals on very few occasions showed any judgment or capacity. But the panic-stricken runaways of to-day enlisted again none the worse in two or three weeks; the generals discomfited to-day were ready to try again with a serene self-confidence that was not quite a step beyond the sublime. Guerilla bands spread everywhere, sometimes serving in a so-called regular army, sometimes behaving as brigands. A despatch could not be sent to France without a large escort: the duty of convoying supplies was incessant, harassing and often unsuccessful. French armies could march where they pleased, but could not permanently conquer a single square mile. On the other hand the Spaniards unaided could have achieved no definite success against the French armies, and the strain on Napoleon's resources, though real, would not have been ruinous. It was the English intervention which converted the Spanish ulcer, as Napoleon himself termed it, into a deadly disease

eating into the very vitals of his power. A treaty of alliance was concluded between England and Spain, signed, as it happened, on the very day of the battle of Corunna (January 19, 1809). The English government did not then know how ignorant, how presumptuous, how untrustworthy, was the knot of self-chosen incapables who styled themselves the Spanish Junta. Nevertheless they took the wise resolution of basing their operations on Portugal and not on Spain. There was a very old alliance with Portugal, which had made the smaller power for a century almost a satellite of the greater one: the Portuguese royal family was in America, and it was hence comparatively easy to rule in its name. But though political considerations dictated this step, it entailed also great military advantages. England having complete command of the sea, the French had to derive all supplies, except such food as the country afforded, from France, which was rendered very difficult by the guerillas. Spain, as a glance at the map shows, is greatly cut up by mountain chains: of these the Sierra de Guadarama, south of the Douro basin, and the Sierra Morena, north of Andalusia, are serious barriers, though not impassable. The country between them is mostly barren, Andalusia (except parts of the east coast which do not enter into account) being the only very fertile region. Moreover the roads were few and bad. Hence it followed that large armies could not long hold together for want of subsistence, except in Andalusia; while even there a French army could not stay, if an enemy in the centre of Spain intercepted its supplies of ammunition, clothing, reinforcements, coming from France. Moreover in Portugal the English army, with an excellent harbour at Lisbon through which to draw its supplies and reinforcements, was on the flank of Spain. This was clearly the position most favourable¹ for dealing effective blows at the French power in Spain, taken as a whole.

¹ Had Wellington's base of operations been Cadiz instead of Lisbon, every step in advance would have pushed the French nearer to their base, and therefore would have rendered the conditions of supply, etc., increasingly favourable to them. A successful advance from Portugal on Madrid cut off the whole south from easy communication with France, without which they could not long maintain their ground.

On these facts, added to the necessity of sparing his men to the utmost, for the English government could not supply large numbers, and by no means realised the importance of their opportunity, Wellington¹ based his general plan. He was convinced, as his Correspondence shows, that sooner or later the nations of Europe would combine to overthrow Napoleon's domination, and that meanwhile to keep alive resistance in the Peninsula would be a steady drain on his resources and would set an example to other nations. Hence his first object was to hold his ground in Portugal; his second was to trouble the French hold on Spain when opportunity offered. Finally he hoped, when pressure elsewhere compelled Napoleon to weaken his Spanish armies, to drive them altogether from the Peninsula. Thus the first, and by far the longest, portion of the war is defensive, the battles being only fought when a paramount object is to be gained; the latter portion is offensive.

Wellington landed in Portugal on April 22, 1809. Promptly marching northwards, he forced the passage of the Douro at Oporto with a cool audacity difficult to surpass, and drove Soult into the mountains with the loss of his artillery. Then returning to Lisbon he planned the defensive works which were to protect him whenever, as was sure to happen, the French pressed him with overwhelming strength. The map shows that Lisbon stands at the end of a broad tongue of land between the estuary of the Tagus and the sea. The city itself was not beyond the range of guns on the opposite shore; but ships could be trusted in case of need to keep at bay any enemy who might come dangerously near in this quarter. Across the tongue of land, some twenty-five miles north of Lisbon, a system of forts was constructed, taking advantage of the heights of Torres Vedras, and other inequalities of the ground. Another line, stronger both in form and armament, was drawn ten miles nearer Lisbon; thus even behind the inner line there was ample room for an army.

Having ordered these works, Wellington concerted measures with the Spanish Junta for an advance into Spain. The plan agreed on was that Wellington in combination with

¹ He was only created Lord Wellington after the battle of Talavera, but it is convenient to use the familiar title all through.

Cuesta, who commanded the largest Spanish army, should move towards Madrid up the valley of the Tagus, while Venegas, with another Spanish army, approached Madrid from the south. He soon found out, by bitter experience, what the Spaniards were worth. The supplies promised to his army were never forthcoming, though the commissaries unblushingly asserted afterwards that the English had had double rations all the time. Cuesta was alternately foolhardy and timid, his men ready to yield to unmeaning panic; Venegas was incredibly dilatory: no trustworthy information could be obtained as to the French armies in the north. Marshal Victor, who faced the allied armies, retired at first to a point where he could prevent Venegas from joining Cuesta: then when he found that the English had halted (Wellington had positively refused to advance any further without supplies), and that Cuesta alone was following him, he turned to fight. The Spanish advanced guard broke and fled, and the whole army was soon in such a state of confusion and terror that Victor might have dispersed it, had not the nearest English division (Sherbrooke's) interposed. Wellington in vain urged Cuesta to retreat a few miles to the position at Talavera which he had already selected: the old man took a mulish delight in rejecting advice. When at dawn next morning the French approached, and Sherbrooke began to retire, Cuesta yielded to necessity, but solaced his insane pride by saying to his staff that he had first made the Englishman go down on his knees. He yielded however so completely as to take up the position Wellington assigned to him, though during the retreat a large part of Cuesta's army fled in wild panic on the near approach of some French horse.

The valley of the Tagus being but narrow, the allied armies were able to cover the whole space between the river and the northern hills. The Spanish troops had their right resting on the Tagus, close to the little town of Talavera, and their front was covered by buildings, ditches, and other obstacles, so that it could hardly be assailed. The left of the Spaniards and right of the English was protected by a large redoubt; from this the English divisions stretched across the plain, their left on a little hill, separated by a deep and narrow bit of valley from

the boundary hills. Victor, coming up before evening, saw that the hill on the English left was but slightly occupied (by some mistake General Hill had not taken up his position), and tried to seize it by a *coup de main*. The attack might have succeeded, had not some of the French troops gone astray in the failing light and intricate ground; it was not without some hard fighting that it was repulsed. Another attempt was made early the next morning (July 28) with an even worse result: for Wellington was led by it to strengthen his left, and render any turning movement much more unpromising than before. King Joseph, who was on the field in person, was advised by his military tutor, Marshal Jourdan, to retreat. It was known to the French, though not as yet to Wellington, that Soult's army from near Salamanca would come into the valley of the Tagus behind the allies in a very few days, and the English must either decamp promptly, or be cut off from Portugal. Thus the game would be won without risk, whereas a third attack on Wellington might well end like the others. Victor however was urgent for a renewal of the battle, and Joseph foolishly assented. During this interval the Spaniards were in great confusion, and one of the few generals who were worth anything sent word to Wellington that Cuesta was betraying him. The message was delivered to the commander of an English brigade who conveyed it to Wellington. "The latter, seated on the summit of the hill which had been so gallantly contested, was intently watching the movements of the advancing enemy; he listened to this somewhat startling message without so much as turning his head, and then drily answering: 'Very well, you may return to your brigade,' continued his survey of the French.¹" Cuesta did not in fact signify, though it required coolness as well as ability to discern it at such a moment. The renewed French attack was directed as before against the British half of the position, a single brigade of cavalry being placed to watch the Spaniards. About two o'clock the French advanced against the whole line, the great object being as before to break or turn the left. Victor had sufficient advantage of numbers over the

¹ All the quotations in this and the following chapter are from Napier.

English alone to engage them on about equal terms on the right, and send a division to turn the left, while attacking with some superiority of force the centre and left. The hill on the left was as before the key of the position, but Victor, had his movements succeeded, would have compelled its abandonment by easier means than mere direct attack. The French left came on with great impetuosity, but Campbell's division advancing in line to meet the columns drove them back with severe loss, and then resumed its position, while the artillery played on the French, and prevented their renewing the attack. In the centre things followed at first much the same course: but there the English guards in repulsing the assault followed up their enemies too far, and were driven back, the French being able to bring overwhelming artillery fire to bear on them; the German legion which formed the rest of Sherbrooke's division was also shaken. The centre seemed broken; but Wellington had drawn down the 48th from the hill on the left. With his usual tactical insight he had seen that the hill would be of no use if he were beaten in the centre; the left must for the moment take care of itself. As on the right, the line showed its superiority over column: after wheeling back to let the retiring crowds pass, the 48th resumed its advance, and pushing the victorious French back, gave time and space for the guards and the Germans to rally, which they quickly did.

Before this, there had occurred on the left one of those heroic feats which military theorists truly say are contrary to all rules of tactics, but which experience shows to be high above rules. On seeing the French division making its way through the narrow valley to his left, Wellington ordered Anson's cavalry brigade to charge them. As they neared the French, who formed squares, they suddenly came on a slight but steep-sided ravine. The veteran colonel of the German hussars stopped short, as he had a perfect right to do, exclaiming, "I will not kill my young men;" but the 23rd light dragoons plunged headlong into the ravine, scrambled up the opposite bank, naturally in great confusion, rallied, dashed between the French squares, and fell furiously on a cavalry regiment in rear. More enemies coming up when they were overmatched already, the 23rd was utterly

broken, and only half their number escaped to the protection of their own lines. The advance of the French was however stopped: after this experience they had no mind to press forward into the plain where masses of fresh cavalry stood in reserve; and the repulse of the centre taking place just afterwards, the whole French army returned, foiled but by no means routed, to their original position. Had the Spaniards been trustworthy, Wellington might even yet have won a great victory; but then had they been so, there would have been no battle of Talavera at all. The Spanish troops engaged amounted to three or four regiments and a few guns. The rest did no more for Wellington than what a natural obstacle might have done, in preventing his right flank being turned. In nominal force the advantage was with the allies, who gained also by standing on the defensive, the numbers being under 50,000 French, against at least 54,000, though the French had great superiority in cavalry; but then 34,000 of these were Spanish. The losses on both sides were severe, Wellington losing over 6000 killed and wounded, the French a thousand more.¹

The day after the battle, when the French were retreating and Wellington was not attempting to pursue them, he was joined by Craufurd's brigade, consisting of the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th. These troops, halting on their way to join the army, were met by crowds of the Spanish fugitives of the 27th, telling the wildest tales of disaster. Craufurd was then fully four ordinary days' march from Talavera, but he resolved not to halt again, and "in 26 hours they crossed the field of battle in a close and compact body, having in the time passed over 62 English miles, and in the hottest season of the year, each man carrying from 50 to 60 pounds weight upon his shoulders."

Wellington had not yet fully learned what the Spaniards were good for. Not content with putting every obstacle in the way of the English obtaining provisions in Talavera, and accommodation for the wounded, of which Cuesta had hardly any himself, the Spanish general obstinately refused

¹ This is the battle which, in a school-book I once saw, was described as a glorious victory won by 29,000 French over 90,000 English and Spaniards.

till too late to take any steps to observe and delay Soult's approach, of which the allies had now somewhat vague information. Wellington, who could on no account allow his retreat on Lisbon to be cut off, was obliged to move himself towards Soult, and left his wounded in care of Cuesta, whose line of retreat being to the south was not endangered, and who solemnly promised to provide transport for all who could be moved. Wellington soon found that Soult's force had been much underrated, and that he must retire towards Portugal, whereupon Cuesta abandoned the English wounded, all of whom, except those who died of neglect and starvation, fell into the hands of the French. It is no wonder that after his experience of Cuesta, Wellington steadily refused to combine operations with any Spanish general.

The campaign of Talavera may in some sense be called a failure; it was too soon to attempt to shake the French hold on Spain, though Wellington may be excused for the mistake. The magnificent defence of Saragossa had created a great sensation; there was no doubt Spaniards could fight. No one could have imagined the ignorance and the irrational pride of their commanders, or the amazing assurance with which government and generals alike gave elaborate undertakings which they never meant to fulfil. At the same time the slaughter of Talavera was not wasted: the victory gave the English cabinet, and still more the nation, confidence alike in their general and in his troops. Talavera was the first distinct defeat sustained by a French army of any size since Napoleon had appeared on the scene.¹ Wellington had two long years of severe struggle before the tide began to flow in his favour, contending at once with the far superior strength of the French and with half-heartedness at home; it may be doubted whether, without Talavera to his credit, he would have successfully overcome these difficulties.

In 1810 Napoleon gave the chief command to Massena, the ablest of his marshals with one possible exception, the

¹ Maida and Vimiero were real defeats, but the numbers engaged were insignificant. Aspern was a great and bloody battle, in which the French on the whole got the worst of it, but it was hardly a distinct Austrian victory.

only one who had gained distinction at the head of an independent army. Massena's instructions were, in one of Napoleon's pet phrases, to drive the English into the sea, and the emperor, who could estimate no forces that could not be expressed in battalions, had every reason to expect that he would achieve his task. Wellington's scheme of defence was based on the geographical conditions. Three important rivers flow out of Spain across Portugal into the Atlantic. Where the Guadiana crosses the frontier stands the great fortress of Badajos on the Spanish side, faced by Elvas on the Portuguese. As both were at this time in the hands of the allies (Elvas indeed remained so throughout) they formed a serious obstacle to an attack on Portugal from this direction. Moreover it was obviously absurd for Massena to base his attack on the south, lengthening his communications by hundreds of miles: all that was possible was a subsidiary attack from the French army in Andalusia, already fully occupied with the hopeless siege of Cadiz. The Tagus valley is narrow, and barren of supplies, and almost as circuitous a route from France as the Guadiana. North of the Tagus, the Sierra de Estrella, which is a sort of continuation of the Sierra de Guadarrama, though at an angle to it, lies behind the frontier between Spain and Portugal. The roads across it into the Tagus basin were few and bad, and Wellington took care to render them worse. Thus the only route that needed serious defence was the northern one by the broad valley of the Douro, the natural and obvious course for an invader based on France, the easiest for an army, though not the shortest, between Lisbon and Madrid. Here also two fortresses faced each other across the frontier, Ciudad Rodrigo in Spain on the Agueda, Almeida in Portugal on the Coa, both rivers tributaries to the Douro. Strong as Massena was, he could not spare troops effectually to blockade these, and yet have sufficient superiority to drive Wellington before him. As a necessary preliminary therefore the two fortresses must be taken. Wellington took up his position near the frontier, so as to harass¹ Massena wherever it was possible without

¹ The exploits of Craufurd, with the light division, acting as Wellington's advanced guard, are the subject of some of Napier's best writing.

fighting a battle, and waited. Ciudad Rodrigo, weakly garrisoned by Spaniards, cost Massena forty days; the commandant, who did his best manfully, was naturally loud in his appeals for help, but Wellington turned a deaf ear. It would have been quixotic to fight a great battle against heavy odds to save a small garrison; as well might a chess-player sacrifice his queen to save a pawn. The turn of Almeida followed, though in consequence of an accidental explosion the siege did not last long. The way was now open for Massena to invade Portugal, though, thanks to Ciudad Rodrigo and to Craufurd, September had been reached. He resolved, as Wellington had hoped, to follow the course of the Mondego.

Sixteen months had now elapsed since Wellington assumed the command. During that time the lines of Torres Vedras had been completed, though no outsiders seem to have understood them, and the Portugese troops, largely officered by Englishmen, had been gradually organised and disciplined. Moreover Wellington had obtained from the Portuguese government authority to order the withdrawal of the inhabitants, and the destruction of mills, barns, everything that could aid the invader. This policy, though not effectually carried out, caused serious difficulty to Massena, and striking the imagination of the Czar of Russia, furnished the model for the defence of that country against Napoleon in 1812. Before the superior force of the French, Wellington had no choice but to retreat, as he had always intended to do: but the Portuguese government, a prey at this time to absurd faction, raised a violent clamour, obstructed his measures for clearing the country, and inspired a general panic among the inhabitants of Lisbon, including even the English civilians. Wellington found it necessary to risk a battle, against his military judgment, in order to prove how irrational was the panic dread of the French, in order also to gain a little more time for clearing the country in front of the lines of Torres Vedras. Fortunately Massena, who was very badly informed, played into his hands: instead of making his way across towards the coast, into the great road from Oporto to Lisbon, he took the direct but very bad road down the Mondego, which, besides other disadvantages, gave his opponent the

chance of turning to bay in a most formidable position. Not only so, he did not press his advance, and so allowed time for Wellington to draw to him the English divisions which had been left to guard the Tagus until it was certain that the French were not coming that way.

The position of Busaco, somewhat too large even for the whole army, would not have been tenable without these troops. It is a mountain ridge, one end abutting on the Mondego, the other joining high, more difficult mountains, with a road running along its crest, and its northern face falling very steeply into a deep ravine, whence an equally steep ascent led up to lower uneven ground over which the French line of approach lay. Moreover projecting masses afforded positions for artillery to sweep a great part of the face. Nothing but infantry could obviously be used to assail such a position. Marshal Ney, who was with the French advanced guard, perceived that it was only partially occupied, and would have attacked at once; but Massena was ten miles in rear, and refused his consent. Two days later all Wellington's divisions had joined him; the peculiarities of the ground had been made the most of, and it was too late. On September 27 the French came on in two great columns with their usual dash and rapidity. The left column, directed a little to the right of the English centre, for a time succeeded in breaking a gap in the English line, till Hill's division, hastening along the ridge from the right (it was in this quarter that the excessive length of the position had caused part to be unoccupied), drove them down again. The other attack, much further towards the English left, had a still more disastrous fate. Craufurd, taking advantage of a hollow on the face of the slope, had drawn up two regiments in line, out of sight of the ascending French, which, as the head of the enemy's column reached the edge of the hollow, suddenly advanced and hurled them back with terrible slaughter. A similar fate befell the smaller and less serious efforts made by the assailants: the attack was doomed to certain failure, if only the defending army stood steady. How disastrous was the repulse may be estimated from the fact that while Wellington lost about 1300 men, Massena lost considerably over three times that number. One advantage Wellington gained from

the battle: his Portuguese troops had been given their fair share of the fighting, and learned by the victory that they need not regard the French as their superiors.

Busaco is an instructive battle in more ways than one. From Wellington's side it is an instance of a political battle, as Napier calls it, of political motives, not military ones, determining a general's action. On Massena's side it illustrates the important lesson that faulty information may easily be ruinous. Not only had he taken the wrong route, believing it to be the best; he also engaged under the impression that the only other alternative was a retreat nearly to Almeida, whereas all the time there was a road over the mountains to his right, which would have enabled him to turn Busaco. On the night of the battle he found this out, and masking the movement next day with a skirmishing attack on the position, he threw his whole army into this narrow cross-road. Had the English general been less hampered by the political conditions, he might well have made Massena rue his audacity in trying so proverbially dangerous a thing as a flank march in presence of the enemy. As it was he felt bound simply to resume his retreat, of which, once in the open country, there could be no cessation, until the lines of Torres Vedras were reached. Massena had never even heard of the lines till a short time before he came in sight of them; it is strange that so little was known about them, seeing that no such elaborate works had been constructed in Europe since the days when the Romans, in the decline of the empire, built their great walls in Northumberland and elsewhere to keep out the barbarians. Massena reconnoitred them from end to end, in the hope of finding a weak spot; but the more he looked at them, the more hopeless the prospect of an assault appeared, for every day in fact added to their strength. After a month he withdrew to Santarem, high up the Tagus, where subsistence was procurable, and there remained all the winter. Wellington was far too severely hampered by politics to attack him. The Portuguese nation was as a whole sound in its patriotism, and the troops only wanted to be taught; but the politicians were selfish, narrow-minded and factious to an incredible extent, and Wellington found it harder to master the politicians than to stop Massena.

Moreover the English government was all this time in a state of perplexity and weakness,¹ and gave the army in Portugal nothing which could on any pretence be withheld.

Thus March arrived before reinforcements reached Wellington ; and then Massena, whose army was greatly diminished through sickness, began his retreat, despairing of reinforcements reaching him in time, or of any effective diversion being caused by the French army of Andalusia. Massena's retreat was conducted with great skill, and it was not till he was nearing Almeida that the pursuing army was able to gain any great advantage over him. Wellington was in truth at the beginning anxious to relieve Badajos, which Soult was besieging with an army from Andalusia, and which was at first gallantly defended by the Spanish garrison. But the commandant having been killed, his successor, traitor or coward, instantly surrendered. The disaster having happened, Wellington followed up Massena more vigorously, and when he had pushed him far enough, detached Beresford with a considerable English force to combine with the Spaniards, and attempt to recover Badajos. He himself pressed Massena back to Ciudad Rodrigo, and blockaded Almeida, accepting battle rather than abandon the prey which had nearly fallen into his hands. The battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, fought on May 5, 1811, was not particularly creditable to either of the rival generals. Tactically it was a drawn battle, strategically it was a distinct victory for Wellington ; for Massena, probably piqued at hearing of his supersession by Marmont, retired after the action, leaving Almeida to its fate. The commandant how-

¹ The disastrous Walcheren expedition, which started while the battle of Talavera was being fought, had wasted a large part of the military strength of England. Sent as it was after Napoleon had forced Austria again to sue for peace, and badly conducted, it was an inevitable failure. This being the case, it is of course true that the men and material would have been more usefully employed in the Peninsula. But it is by no means equally clear that the original idea was faulty. Had even a smaller force, energetically led, been despatched to the same point two months earlier, when Napoleon was still absorbed in remedying his failure at Aspern, the consequences might have been enormous. At the very least it could have ruined Antwerp for purposes of naval construction ; and Napoleon deemed Antwerp, "a pistol pointed at the heart of England," so valuable that in 1814, when almost at the last gasp, he broke off negotiations for peace rather than cede Antwerp.

ever was equal to the occasion ; blowing up the works as completely as he could, he led the garrison out, and with a mixture of skill and good fortune made his way in safety through the besieging lines. Almeida was of no immediate use, but it remained in Wellington's hands, something at least of a barrier against a fresh invasion of Portugal.

Meanwhile Beresford had commenced on the very day of the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro a so-called siege of Badajos. He had no proper siege train, and must have failed in any case : but within a week Soult was approaching, and the attempt had to be abandoned. Beresford very unwisely yielded to the eagerness of his own troops and the wish of the Spanish generals, and agreed to accept battle—very unwisely, for nothing could be gained, and much might be lost. Even victory would be contrary to Wellington's principle of not expending a British soldier unless for an adequate end. It is true that he had 30,000 infantry, while Soult had only 19,000 ; but a very large majority of these were Spanish troops, nearly starved and miserably led : on the other hand Soult was superior in guns, and had double the number of cavalry. Moreover Beresford mismanaged his position. He occupied a line of high ground with the fordable stream of the Albuera in front of it. As the road which formed his line of retreat led away in rear of his left centre, he perhaps naturally placed his English and Portuguese on the left, leaving the Spanish general Blake, over whom he had no authority, to occupy the centre and right, which was posted on the famous hill for which the battle of Albuera will ever be remembered. So far he had perhaps done wisely, but he neglected to occupy a detached hill on the other side of the stream opposite his right ; and behind this hill Soult was able to mass his troops unobserved. The battle (May 16, 1811) began as Beresford expected, with an attack on the bridge and village of Albuera in front of his left ; but this was only a feint. Simultaneously more than half the French army moved out from under cover of the hill that Beresford had ignored, and were soon in line across his right flank. Blake refused to believe the evidence of his senses until too late ; the Spaniards were only beginning to form a new front to the right when the French were upon them. Naturally they were thrown into confusion. Stewart coming

up with a British division to their support was in so great a hurry that he did not form line until he reached the summit level of the hill. A mass of French cavalry, their approach unseen in the obscurity of a heavy storm, charged the leading brigade as it was forming, and nearly destroyed it. Fortunately the same darkness concealed this blow from Soult, and the rest of the division had time to reach the hill and renew the fight; part of the Spanish troops also were brought into action. Both sides fought desperately, but the line formation of the English gave them some little advantage over the close columns of the French. Beresford for a moment wavered, but recovered himself, and acquiesced in the order already given in his name, to bring up practically the last reserves to sustain the conflict on the hill. The chief stress fell on the fusileer brigade, consisting of the 7th and 23rd regiments under General Myers, and led into action by General Cole commanding the division, which mounted the hill just in the nick of time.

“At this time six guns were in the enemy’s possession, the whole of Werlé’s reserves were coming forward to reinforce the front column of the French, the remnant of Houghton’s brigade could no longer maintain its ground, the field was heaped with carcasses, the lancers were riding furiously about the captured artillery on the upper parts of the hill, and behind all, Hamilton’s Portuguese and Alten’s Germans, now withdrawing from the bridge, seemed to be in full retreat. Soon however Cole’s fusileers, flanked by a battalion of the Lusitanian legion under Colonel Hawkshawe, mounted the hill, drove off the lancers, recovered five of the captured guns and one colour, and appeared on the right of Houghton’s brigade precisely as Abercrombie passed it on the left.

“Such a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy’s heavy masses, which were increasing and pressing onwards as to an assured victory: they wavered, hesitated, and then vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed, Cole, the three colonels, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe, fell wounded, and

the fusileer battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships. But suddenly and sternly recovering they closed on their terrible enemies: and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult with voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans break from the crowded columns and sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately upon friends and foes, while the horsemen hovering on the flank threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order, their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as slowly and with a horrid carnage it was pushed by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the height. There the French reserves mixed with the struggling multitude and endeavoured to sustain the fight, but the effort only increased the irremediable confusion, the mighty mass gave way and like a loosened cliff went headlong down the steep: the rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."

Soult was defeated: he had lost a third of his army, and did not see his way to renew the conflict, though his still formidable cavalry and artillery would have enabled him to do so with good prospects. Beresford deserves credit for holding his ground boldly, though he was well aware that his crippled army was incapable of fighting again: to retreat was to render inevitable the destruction which a confident attitude might and did avert.

Wellington, relieved from any further anxiety in the north, came to Beresford's support. During the rest of the year he continued his system of remaining practically on the defensive, while giving the French as much annoyance as

possible. He attempted a fresh siege of Badajos, which had the effect of bringing Marmont down from the Douro basin, and Soult back from Andalusia. Then retiring to a position to cover Elvas he awaited attack, which the French marshals, hampered by various difficulties, declined to make. Later in the year he blockaded Ciudad Rodrigo, compelling the French armies to concentrate for its support, and again retiring before superior force. His political difficulties, strictly so called, were as great as ever, perhaps greater: for the Portuguese authorities took advantage of his successes to assume that the war was over and that the British army might be got rid of, and the home government supported him but feebly. But his army was more and more inured to war, and his Portuguese well worthy to stand in line with the English. Moreover Napoleon was already beginning to withdraw troops from Spain for the huge army he was organising against Russia. It was practically certain, when 1811 closed, that 1812 would see Napoleon engaged in a gigantic contest with Russia. The day for which Wellington had been waiting patiently was beginning to dawn.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PENINSULA

PART II.—OFFENSIVE

DURING the year 1811 the French arms made considerable progress on the east side of Spain: this did not however give them any real additional advantage as against Wellington. They had more fortresses to garrison, more territory to occupy, and the Spanish armies went on causing much the same trouble to them as before. Moreover Napoleon's system of giving the various generals independent spheres of action, with no common control except his own, worked in Wellington's favour. If he made a threatening movement against Marmont, who commanded what was called the army of Portugal, occupying the basin of the upper Douro, or against Soult in Andalusia, neither marshal could order the other to assist him by a diversion. There was an obvious difference between combined action ordered by a chief who controlled the whole, and co-operation arranged between equals who had each his own separate ends in view. Napoleon should either have come to Spain in person—he was too far off in point of time to direct from Paris—or have given one marshal¹ command throughout the country. When towards the end of 1811 Wellington judged that the time was come for operations no longer merely defensive in purpose, he formed his plans to take advantage of this want of union among his enemies.

It has been pointed out that the ways into Spain from

¹ King Joseph was indeed declared commander-in-chief in March 1812, but the marshals disputed his authority, and denounced his plans as unwise. Their criticisms were not unreasonable, but "one bad general is better than two good ones."

Portugal are practically three : but the central one by the valley of the Tagus being ill suited for the movements of armies, there are but two really advantageous. That by the basin of the Douro is guarded at the frontier by two fortresses, Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo ; that by the Guadiana is guarded by Elvas and Badajos. Without possession of the pair of fortresses commanding one route or the other, invasion is scarcely feasible : with both pairs in his hands Wellington could choose, and he already held both Almeida and Elvas. Accordingly he resolved during the winter season, when the French would have serious difficulty in moving, to besiege first one and then the other of the Spanish border fortresses. He began with Ciudad Rodrigo, partly because it was the easier task to prepare for, as he had a battering-train in Almeida of which the French knew nothing (the guns were supposed to have been brought there to arm the fortress), partly because he then purposed to move against Soult if he succeeded in capturing Badajos. The preparations for the siege were very quietly made in Almeida, and on January 8, 1812, the first British troops appeared before Ciudad Rodrigo. That very evening a detached fort to the north of the town was suddenly stormed, which enabled the trenches to be begun much nearer to the walls than could otherwise have been done. Wellington had calculated that he should require twenty-four days, but the uncertainties were great, for besides the prospect of Marmont coming to its relief, there was always the risk that heavy rain might raise the river Agueda in flood prematurely, which would have stopped the siege by intercepting communication across it. On the 19th the walls were sufficiently breached to make storming them possible, though according to the ordinary rules of siege warfare much remained to be done before an assault was made. Wellington however knew as well how and when to make a sacrifice in order to attain an adequate object, as how to spare his men : he issued orders for the assault to take place that night, ending with the emphatic words : "Ciudad Rodrigo must be stormed this evening." There were two breaches near together on the north face of the fortress, both of which were directly assailed, besides minor attacks on other points. The fighting at the main

breach was desperate, for the French were well prepared : possibly the attack there might not have succeeded, but the conflict was ended by the success of the light division at the smaller breach.

“The bottom of the ditch was dark and intricate, and the forlorn hope took too much to their left ; but the storming party went straight to the breach, which was so contracted that a gun placed lengthwise across the top nearly blocked up the opening. Here the forlorn hope rejoined the stormers, but when two-thirds of the ascent were gained, the leading men, crushed together by the narrowness of the place, staggered under the weight of the enemy’s fire ; and such is the instinct of self-defence, that although no man had been allowed to load, every musket in the crowd was snapped. The commander, Major Napier, was at this moment stricken to the earth by a grape-shot which shattered his arm, but he called on his men to trust to their bayonets, and all the officers simultaneously sprang to the front, when the charge was renewed with a furious shout, and the entrance was gained. The supporting regiments, coming up in sections abreast, then reached the rampart, the 52nd wheeled to the left, the 43rd to the right, and the place was won.”

The loss of life was great, the English having nearly as many killed and wounded as the whole garrison : General Craufurd, the brilliant commander of the light division, was killed. The officer who led the forlorn hope at the lesser breach was the man to whom the governor of Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered, an incident probably unique in the annals of siege warfare. The advantage gained, which was attainable in no other way, was well worth the cost. It was henceforth impossible for Marmont seriously to invade the north-east of Portugal : and the capture in Ciudad Rodrigo of Marmont’s battering-train made it certain that he would not even try.

Wellington’s calculations were nicely adapted to the season of the year, as well as to the other conditions. He felt sure that in the rains of February and March, with all the rivers in flood, Marmont could not practically move at all, and that therefore he might be watched by a very small force, while he himself went south to continue the scheme

he had formed. Elvas served, as Almeida had done, for a convenient place to make siege preparations within a short distance of Badajos, and on March 16 the famous siege was begun, ten days at least later than Wellington had intended, through the default of the Portuguese in providing transport. This was a much more serious task than the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, the garrison being three times as large, the defences stronger, and the governor, Phillipon, a man of great energy and fertility of resource. Two of Soult's divisions were near at hand; but Wellington, having decided that he might practically ignore Marmont, had plenty of men to spare for covering the siege, at least until Soult should approach with his whole army. He had also arranged, so far as it was possible to arrange anything with the Spanish armies, that one of them should be in a position to march on Seville if Soult denuded Andalusia too completely of troops.

Badajos is situated on the south bank of the Guadiana, with a strong fort on the north bank. The castle was at the north-east corner of the town, close to the river: along the east face a rivulet flowing into the Guadiana had been artificially extended into a complete defence for nearly half the length. A small outwork covered the northern end of this piece of water, and outside its southern end, on an isolated hill, stood a work called the Picurina. The plan was to breach, at the south-eastern corner of the town, the two great bastions known as the Trinidad and the Sta. Maria, and the curtain uniting them. In order that this might be done effectually, the Picurina must first be taken, and after the siege works had made sufficient progress, on the night of March 25, this work was stormed, and batteries constructed on its ruins. As the siege progressed, Soult drew near, and arrangements were actually made for leaving two divisions to hold the trenches, and marching with the rest of the army to give him battle. On April 6 however the breaches were reported practicable, Soult being still some way off; Badajos could therefore be assaulted with adequate force.

Three separate attacks were arranged, besides minor ones merely to distract attention, all to begin at ten p.m. The third division, Picton's, was to cross the rivulet on the east

side and scale the castle walls ; the fifth was to attack the west face of the town ; to the fourth and light divisions was assigned the frightful task of storming the breaches. A fire-ball thrown by the French however disclosed to them the third division ready formed and awaiting the signal : the assault was consequently begun half-an-hour sooner on the east and south-east, and the perfect concert with the other distant attacks was lost. After one failure, the third division succeeded in scaling the castle and driving the French out of it, but were unable for some time to advance any further. The assault on the breaches was one of the most terrible scenes on record. Nothing could exceed the determination of the stormers, but the French had made preparations for defence which were simply insuperable.

“ Now a multitude bounded up the great breach as if driven by a whirlwind, but across the top glittered a range of sword-blades, sharp-pointed, keen-edged on both sides, and firmly fixed in ponderous beams, which were chained together and set deep in the ruins ; and for ten feet in front, the ascent was covered with loose planks, studded with sharp iron points, on which the feet of the foremost being set the planks moved, and the unhappy soldiers, falling forward on the spikes, rolled down upon the ranks behind. Then the Frenchmen, shouting at the success of their stratagem, and leaping forward, plied their shot with terrible rapidity, for every man had several muskets ; and each musket in addition to its ordinary charge contained a small cylinder of wood stuck full of leaden slugs which scattered like hail when they were discharged.

“ Again the assailants rushed up the breaches, and again the sword-blades, immovable and impassable, stopped their charge, and the hissing shells and thundering powder-barrels exploded unceasingly. Hundreds of men had fallen, and hundreds more were dropping, but still the heroic officers called aloud for new trials, and sometimes followed by many, sometimes by a few, ascended the ruins ; and so furious were the men themselves, that in one of these charges, the rear strove to push the foremost on to the sword-blades, willing even to make a bridge of their writhing bodies, but the others frustrated the attempt by dropping down ; and men fell so fast from the shot, that it was hard to know

who went down voluntarily, who were stricken, and many stooped unhurt that never rose again. Vain also would it have been to break through the sword-blades, for the trench and parapet behind the breach were finished, and the assailants, crowded into even a narrower space than the ditch was, would still have been separated from their enemies, and the slaughter would have continued.

“Two hours spent in these vain efforts convinced the soldiers that the breach of the Trinidad was impregnable; and as the opening in the curtain, although less strong, was retired, and the approach to it impeded by deep holes, and cuts made in the ditch, the troops did not much notice it after the partial failure of one attack which had been made early. Gathering in dark groups and leaning on their muskets, they looked up with sullen desperation at the Trinidad, while the enemy stepping out on the ramparts, and aiming their shots by the light of the fire-balls which they threw over, asked, as their victims fell, ‘*Why they did not come into Badajos?*’”

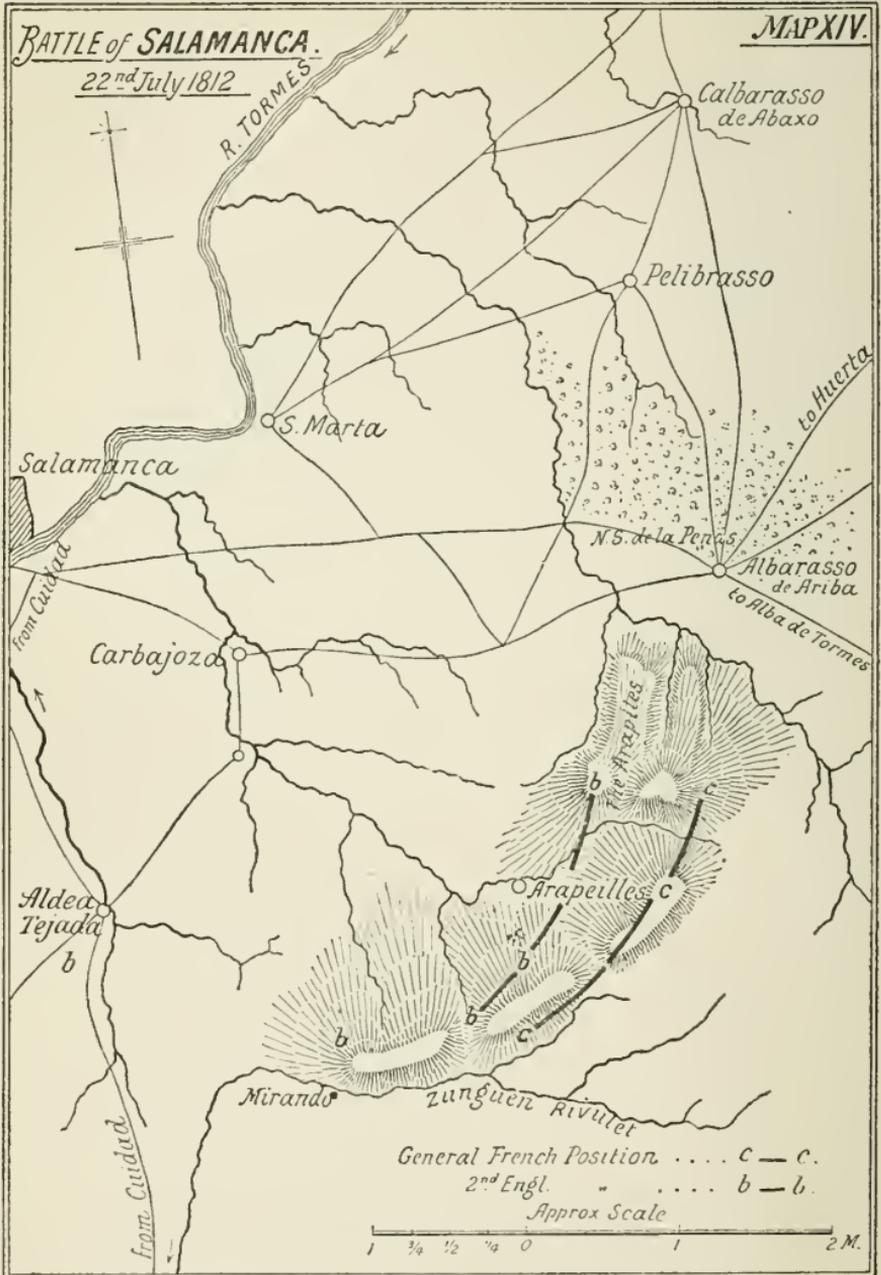
Meanwhile the attack on the west face of the town had succeeded, after one or two attempts, and soldiers of the fifth division were making their way into the empty streets. Wellington, ignorant of this, and perceiving no movement from the castle, the capture of which had been reported to him, ordered the assailants of the breaches to withdraw and re-form for a fresh attack. This however was not necessary: the French, taken in flank both from the castle and from the west, abandoned the defence. The relics of the garrison which had withdrawn to the outlying fort north of the Guadiana surrendered next morning. Over the frightful expenditure of life in this storm, and over the horrors of the sack of Badajos, it is better to draw a veil. Wellington’s Peninsular veterans were capable of any deeds of desperate courage, or of steady endurance, but they were also capable of great atrocities on the rare occasions when their officers lost control over them.

The Spaniards, to whom Ciudad Rodrigo had been handed over, had so grossly neglected the duty of repairing the fortifications, and the Portuguese government was so dilatory, to use no stronger word, in supplying all four fortresses, that Wellington’s plan for invading Andalusia, to

BATTLE of SALAMANCA.

22nd July 1812

MAP XIV.



General French Position c — c.
2nd Engl. " b — b.
Approx Scale

1 ¼ ½ ¼ 0 1 2 M.

fight Soult there, was necessarily abandoned. The defensive side of his duty was obviously the essential one. Still he had it now in his power to choose his own route and his own time for entrance into Spain: and he utilised the interval to render the communications of the French circuitous and difficult. Soult's bridge train having been captured in Badajos, a stroke of good fortune which matched the capture of Marmont's siege train in Ciudad Rodrigo, they could only cross the Tagus at permanent bridges. The lowest bridge on the Tagus, a boat bridge protected by three small forts, was at Almaraz; and General Hill by a brilliant dash seized the forts and destroyed the bridge. Almost simultaneously the bridge over the Tagus at Alcantara, down in Portugal, was skilfully repaired. The combined result of the two operations was to make the communication between Hill, who was left to watch the Guadiana, and Wellington when he moved to the Douro region, a fortnight shorter than the distance between Marmont and Soult's northernmost division.

On June 13, the spring rains being over, Wellington, having concentrated his immediate army near Ciudad Rodrigo, marched on Salamanca. His motives for deciding to operate against Marmont rather than in Andalusia seem to have been various, some embracing the whole area of the Peninsula, one at least the practical consideration that his supplies, brought by water up the Douro, could more quickly and easily be conveyed to the army. He had no intention of running serious risks, or of fighting a great battle unless he could do so under favourable conditions. If successful, he could greatly shake the French hold on Spain: if he found Marmont too strong, his retreat into Portugal was insured by possession of the fortresses. Marmont retired at once, leaving garrisons in the forts round Salamanca. These forts offered unexpectedly long resistance, and Wellington, encamped on the high ground north-east of the city, did not think it prudent to risk a battle until they were in his hands, though Marmont's somewhat rash manœuvres, undertaken in the hope of saving them, gave him more than one opportunity. On the 27th the forts fell, and Marmont, having no longer any motive for lingering near Salamanca, and expecting reinforcements from the north, promptly retreated behind

the Douro. Wellington followed, but could not pass the river, of which the enemy held or had destroyed the bridges, except by deep and dangerous fords. He could only wait for his antagonist to make the next move, which soon came. On receiving his reinforcements, Marmont re-crossed the Douro, and a series of complicated movements ensued, in which Marmont out-manceuvred Wellington, compelling him to retire on Salamanca again, and seizing passages over the river Tormes above the city. That river, after flowing northwards for some distance, makes a great bend to the westward from a point about east of Salamanca, and then after passing the town, which is on its right bank, flows away north-westwards into the Douro. It was in the space enclosed by this curve of the Tormes, south-east from Salamanca, that the great battle was fought. Marmont's purpose in crossing the river into this space was to threaten the Ciudad Rodrigo road, and so compel Wellington to retreat or lose his one line of communication. Wellington naturally also crossed the Tormes by the fords near Salamanca: being aware that further reinforcements, especially of cavalry, in which Marmont was relatively deficient, would arrive in a day or so, he had made up his mind to retreat at night unless something unexpected should happen. And the unexpected did happen: Marmont, who had hitherto carried off the honours of the campaign so far as manœuvring went, for there had been no important fighting, suddenly committed a gross tactical blunder.

Early on the morning of July 22, Wellington's army occupied a position three or four miles from Salamanca, the left resting on the ford of Santa Marta above the town, with Pakenham's division beyond the river, and the right extending nearly to two small rugged hills, called the Arapiles. Marmont, whose object was to turn the English right, and so cut them off from the Ciudad Rodrigo road, and compel them to fight with their backs to the Tormes, made a demonstration towards Wellington's right front, driving in the cavalry occupying posts in front, while the mass of the French army marched in a direction to bring them across the flank of the English line. The possession of the Arapiles would have enabled him to form line across Wellington's flank unopposed, if not undiscovered: accord-

ingly he sent forward a detachment to seize them. A staff officer saw this movement beginning, and informed Wellington, who hitherto had neglected the little hills, apparently not expecting Marmont's movement. Just in time a Portuguese regiment occupied the northernmost of the two Arapiles, but the French could not be prevented from seizing the other. Marmont had thus secured part of the advantage he aimed at, on the other hand Wellington was now fully aware of his adversary's purpose. Accordingly he formed his army on a new front facing southwards: what had been his right became the left resting on the Arapiles hill, the main body massed on the slopes behind the hill, while the right occupied the little village of Arapiles. Pakenham's division, with its attendant brigade of cavalry, was at the same time brought across the Tormes, and posted at Aldea Tejada, two or three miles off, where it covered the Ciudad Rodrigo road, and was completely out of sight of the French. Wellington had thus gone far towards neutralising the advantage which he had allowed Marmont to gain in turning his right: he held a strong position, difficult to assail, and it was open to him to retreat under cover of the darkness, though it would have been more than dangerous to do so in the day-time.

Several hours passed away, for a great part of Marmont's army had far to march before coming into position. The marshal at last grew impatient, and in order to draw Wellington from his position, ordered his left, Thomière's division of infantry with a quantity of cavalry and guns, to move westwards so as to threaten the Ciudad Rodrigo road. Marmont was of course totally ignorant that Pakenham's division was ready to stop any such movement: but anyhow the mistake was flagrant, as gross as the blunder of the allies at Austerlitz. Wellington instantly poured his troops down from behind the Arapiles hill on to the lower ground about the village of the same name, and formed in two lines, the right flanked by cavalry. At the same time he ordered Pakenham to advance against the line of march of the French left. Marmont saw too late that he had been over hasty: the divisions which were to form his centre were not yet on the ground. Wellington's advance had brought him under a heavy fire from the enemy's artillery ranged opposite him, and Marmont hoped

that this might serve to check the English until he could retrieve his mistake. It was too late: suddenly he saw Pakenham's troops come into view and meet Thomière's long column of march, while two English batteries took it in flank. Marmont personally was spared further effort, for a shell struck him down with a broken arm and other wounds as he descended from the Arapiles. The fall of the commander increased the confusion, the more so as the next in command was soon also wounded. The rout of Thomière's division was soon complete, and its commander was killed. Wellington had only waited for Pakenham to come well into action before advancing in the centre, at the same time sending a brigade to assail the Arapiles hill held by the French. The battle raged fiercely for a short time along the front, where Clausel, on whom the command had devolved, had now come up into line. The French left was to all intents and purposes destroyed, partly by Pakenham, partly by a grand charge of Le Marchant's cavalry, which dashed forward from the right of the main body. The centre and right kept up the conflict for some time longer, all the better because the English attack on the Arapiles had been heavily repulsed. The battle however was lost, and Clausel had only to retreat as best he could. This he managed with great skill, covering his rear with clouds of skirmishers, until gradually his troops gained the shelter of the forest from which they had emerged in the forenoon with every prospect of victory. The oncoming darkness prevented direct pursuit, but Wellington was little concerned at this, for he had pushed forward on his left the divisions that had formed his reserve towards the fords by which alone the French could cross the Tormes, assuming that the castle of Alba de Tormes was held by the Spanish troops which he had placed there. The Spanish commander had however evacuated the place on Marmont's approach the previous day, and had carefully omitted to inform Wellington. Hence the French were able to escape by Alba with much less loss in prisoners than well might have been. The French loss however was very serious: out of about 42,000 men nearly 12,000 were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. Wellington had to pay the heavy price of 6000 men out of 46,000 for his victory; but

by it he shook the French hold on Spain in every corner of the country.

Though the defeated army was seriously disorganised beyond its heavy losses, Clausel nevertheless tried to make a stand beyond the Douro, in the expectation that king Joseph, with the small army at his immediate disposal, would there join him. Joseph was distracted between many counsels, and consequently did not act promptly. Wellington however decided the question for him. Forcing Clausel from the Douro, he entered Valladolid, seizing the French stores there. Then leaving a small force to face Clausel, who had retreated towards Burgos, and who could not be in a condition to resume offensive operations for some time, Wellington turned upon Joseph, and easily drove him from Madrid. The intruding king, after much hesitation, retired eastwards, and sent positive orders to Soult to evacuate Andalusia and bring his army to the east side of Spain. The occupation of Madrid by Wellington involved the capture of a vast quantity of French material of war, which they found it difficult to replace; but the moral effects were incomparably greater, as an encouragement to the Spanish people. A great part of the north was already in a state of insurrection, in spite of the presence of French troops: this stroke stimulated them by the hope of speedy success, besides setting the whole south free from the invaders. Wellington was perfectly aware that his hold on Madrid could be but temporary: as soon as Soult and Joseph were united, they would have strength enough to compel him to retire. This could not however take place immediately: so Wellington, leaving Hill at Madrid, marched northwards, hoping to inflict another blow on Clausel's army, now commanded by Souham, in the time at his disposal. At Burgos he allowed himself to be drawn into a siege of the castle, which was bravely and skilfully defended, and proved impregnable to field artillery, which was all that Wellington had with him. The concentration of the enemy's armies in the east rendered it impossible for him to maintain his position much longer. Accordingly on October 21 he began for the last time a retreat into Portugal, Hill also abandoning Madrid. The latter part of the retreat had to be conducted in frightful weather, and was marked by more disorder in the British

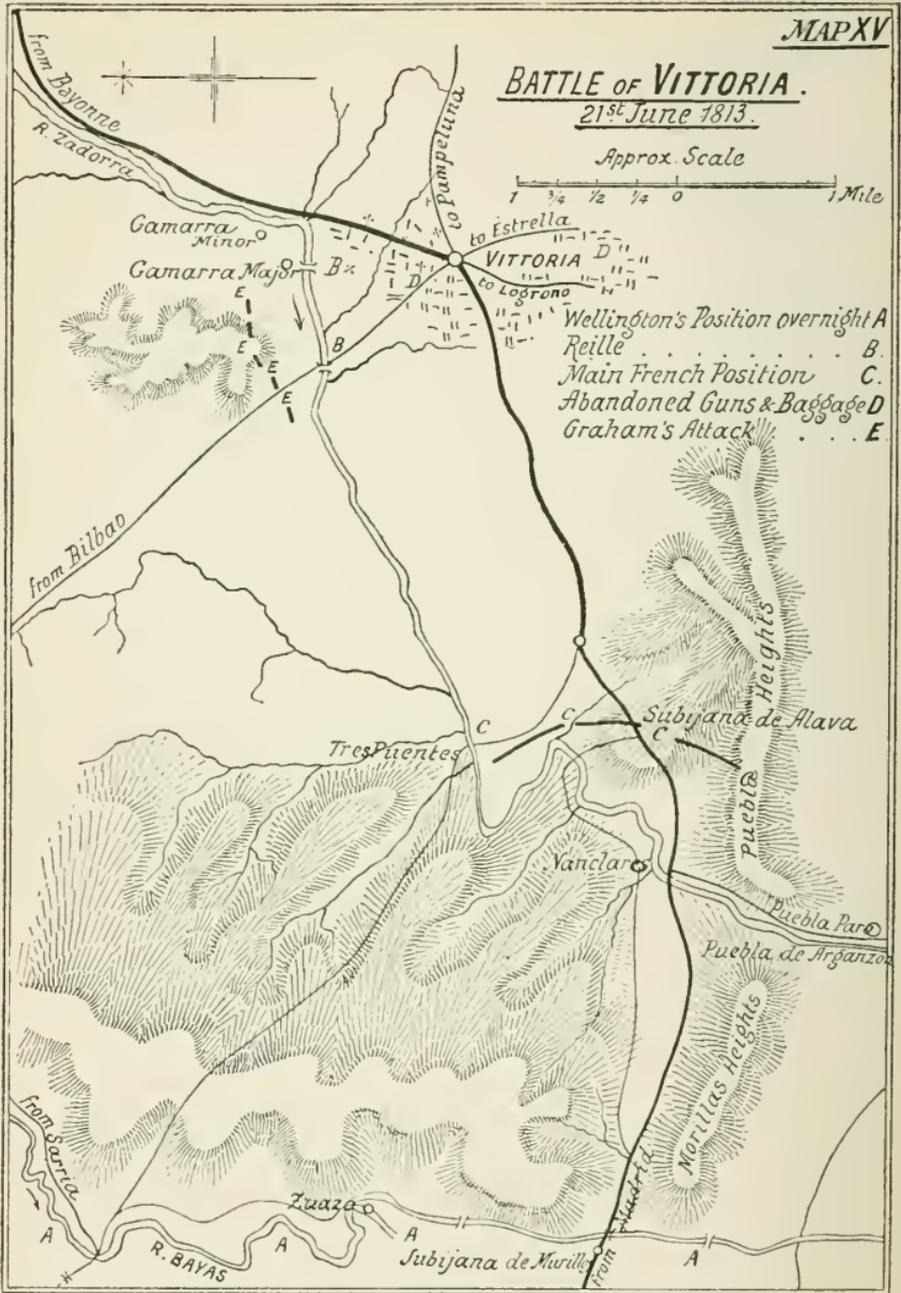
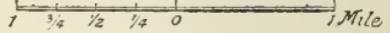
army than occurred at any other time during the war ; thus the losses were severe, out of all proportion to the pressure which the French were able to exercise.

Just at the time when Wellington turned his back on Burgos, Napoleon's retreat from Moscow began. Before the end of the year he was driven out of Russia, having lost nearly half-a-million of men : Prussia also, hitherto his nominal ally, rose in arms against him. In order to make head against Russia and Prussia on the Elbe, he had to withdraw troops from Spain, besides directing to Germany reinforcements and supplies which otherwise might have been devoted to the Spanish armies. Hence when the campaign of 1813 began, Wellington had the superiority of strength, though his enemies were now less widely scattered than before the evacuation of Andalusia. There could be no doubt that to invade Spain once more in the same general direction as in 1812 would be the most effective. Even Sir John Moore's small force, boldly plunging into Spain by that route at the end of 1808, had made Napoleon fear for his line of communication with France, and compelled him to detach overwhelming forces against the English. *A fortiori* Wellington, advancing by that line with an army equal to all that king Joseph could bring together, must compel him to evacuate Madrid, and retreat sufficiently far northwards to guard the main road to France. Wellington knew by his experience of the last year that the line of the Douro beyond Salamanca was difficult to force in the face of a fairly equal enemy. He therefore resolved that a large portion of his army should cross the Douro down in Portugal, and then move eastwards, while he himself advanced *viâ* Salamanca. The pressure of his left wing would compel the French in his front to retire, for fear of being completely outflanked. And here came in the advantage which he derived from the English command of the sea. Instead of dragging behind him an ever-lengthening chain, in the shape of communication with Lisbon, which had hitherto been his base for supplies, he could, if confident of having the upper hand in the north-west of Spain, have his supplies brought to the northern ports, and conveyed thence by comparatively short journeys. And he was confident, so thoroughly so as to let it be seen ; it is told that when he

BATTLE OF VITTORIA.

21st June 1813.

Approx. Scale



passed the frontier into Spain, he rose in his stirrups, and looking round waved his hand, exclaiming: "Farewell, Portugal!" During four weary years he had stood substantially on the defensive, guarding the frontier if he could, retreating if he could not, obliged to withdraw behind it after incursions into Spain. Now at last his turn was come, and he knew it.

Wellington's movements were at the beginning so far concealed that the French did not penetrate his purpose. King Joseph did not understand that the game was substantially lost, and hoped to concentrate the French armies behind the Douro, and stop Wellington, if he could not force him back to Portugal once more. Graham's divisions appearing north of the Douro, and steadily pushing forwards, undeceived him. The French retreated first to Burgos, protecting as long as possible the vast amount of property of all kinds which was being poured along the great high-road to Bayonne, from the reserve artillery to the pictures robbed from Spanish churches and palaces, all the treasure and apparatus of the usurping government and court, all the military stores which had accumulated during five years of war, all the non-military persons who had so identified themselves with the invaders that they dared not stay in Spain. Wellington continued moving in the same manner, pushing his left forward while with his right he followed up the French, thus ever threatening to cut their communications, ever securing the command of more and more of the north coast. King Joseph found it necessary to retreat still further, till at Vittoria he had to choose between abandoning Spain altogether, and risking a battle. That he could have fought with at least equal chances of success two or three times, at earlier stages of the retreat, seems clear: but there was no sound directing head at the French head-quarters. Joseph was always incompetent, his military adviser, Marshal Jourdan, was either over-ruled or failed even less excusably because he had more experience; the subordinate generals received vacillating orders. The whole machine in fact was out of gear; though in the various combats, large and small, generals and soldiers fought as well as ever, the army as a whole expected to be beaten and was beaten.

The basin of Vittoria is about twelve miles in length,

from the defile of Salinas, where the river Zadorra enters it on the east, to the defile of Puebla, where the river quits it to flow towards the Ebro. The great royal road, the only one good enough for the enormous convoys with which the French army was burdened, traversed these defiles, running through the town of Vittoria on the south side of the river. The basin is more or less completely surrounded with hills, crossed by rough and difficult roads. To the west is the valley of the small river Bayas, which converges towards the Zadorra, joining the Ebro just above it. From the Bayas there is a way into the basin of Vittoria by a gap in the hills behind the village of Subijana de Morillos, four or five miles from the Puebla defile. A dozen miles higher up the Bayas the road from Bilbao crosses that stream, and threading the defiles of the northern hills comes down straight on Vittoria. The French, who were in fact to fight for the plunder of Spain and the accumulated material of the army, had been already weakened by large detachments sent forward in charge of convoys. Outnumbered in fact, outweighed still more in imagination, they were massed, except Reille's divisions, at the western end of the basin, the plain behind them being full of waggons of all descriptions. Reille was posted north of Vittoria, facing the Bilbao road, so far from the rest of the army that he could not possibly be supported if attacked by superior numbers, though it is obvious that if Reille were overpowered the great road would be lost. Nothing could better illustrate the extreme unwisdom of not standing to fight earlier: defeat at Vittoria meant the loss of everything, and the dispositions made invited defeat. Wellington fully realised his advantage: he sent Graham with some 20,000 men up the Bayas, to cross into the basin of Vittoria by the Bilbao road and attack Reille, while the rest of the army attacked the main body of the French posted behind the Zadorra at the west end of the basin.

At daybreak on June 21 Wellington's immediate right under Hill moved forwards and slowly crossed the Zadorra just below the defile of Puebla. There was no occasion for haste, rather it was expedient to be leisurely, so as to give time for Graham to accomplish his much longer march. Then a brigade of Spanish infantry was sent to scale the heights which form the eastern side of the defile, and push

along them so as to threaten to turn the French left. The remainder of the right wing passed through the defile and attacked the French left in front. Meanwhile Wellington with his centre had made his way through and over the hills separating the Bayas from the Zadorra, part by the gap of Subijana de Morillos, so as to converge on Hill's force, part some distance further to the northwards. By this time it was one o'clock, and the distant sound of cannonading told that Graham was already engaged. The French main army began to retreat, pressed steadily in front by Wellington, till they were driven back to within a mile of Vittoria. By this time Graham, who had considerably larger forces than those immediately opposed to him, had obtained command of the royal road. Carrying out on a small scale in action the same idea which had inspired Wellington's movements on the large scale, he had pushed forwards his left, winning possession of the village of Gamarra Mayor on Reille's extreme right. The French here held their ground with admirable tenacity, and Graham could seize neither the bridge at Gamarra, nor that directly in his front by which the Bilbao road enters Vittoria, though his guns could sweep the great road towards France. Reille thus saved the French army from annihilation: if he had been driven over the Zadorra a comparatively small part would have been able to escape at all. Thanks to him, the bulk of the soldiers were able to retire by the Pampeluna road; but it could scarcely be called an army. The losses in the battle, or rather in the pair of simultaneous battles, had not been exceptional, and had been tolerably equal, about 6000 killed and wounded on each side; but nothing escaped except the men. To quote the words of a French officer who took part in the action: "They lost all their equipages, all their guns, all their treasure, all their stores, all their papers, so that no man could prove how much pay was due to him: generals and soldiers alike were reduced to the clothes on their backs, and most of them were barefoot."

The deliverance of Spain was not yet complete, but it was virtually achieved by the battle of Vittoria. Before Wellington could capture San Sebastian, the fortress which guarded the Spanish side of the frontier at the extreme south-west corner of France, Soult had been sent by Napoleon

to reorganise the disordered fragments of several separate commands which had escaped from Vittoria. As soon as he could move, Soult crossed the passes of the western Pyrenees, trying to break up the scattered parts of the English army, which had to besiege San Sebastian and Pampeluna, besides its other duties. Wellington was able to concentrate just in time, and after some very complicated warfare in the mountain country, involving serious losses on both sides, Soult was driven back into France. Before the end of the year Wellington was in France; he had stormed San Sebastian, converted the siege of Pampeluna into a blockade, driven Soult successively across the two little rivers beyond the frontier, and surrounded Bayonne. The fall of Napoleon early in 1814 put an end to the war, not without two more battles, in the latter of which Soult was driven from a very strong position close to the city of Toulouse, while inflicting very great loss on his assailants. Wellington had contributed largely to the overthrow of Napoleon by his direct efforts, by his caution and foresight so long as was necessary, by his daring at the right moment, by his skilful and bold offensive strategy. How much he contributed indirectly, by keeping up resistance to the universal conqueror in one corner of Europe, it would be difficult to estimate.

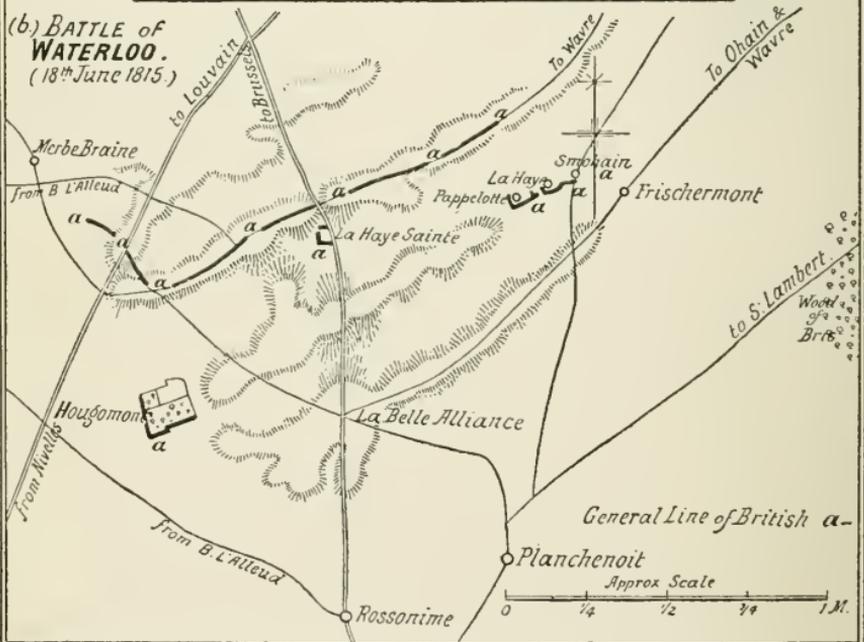
CAMPAIGNS of
WATERLOO (1815) & MARLBOROUGH.

MAP XVI.

(a) General Map.



(b) BATTLE of
WATERLOO.
 (18th June 1815.)



CHAPTER XIV

WATERLOO

[NOTE.—Controversy has raged over almost every point of the Waterloo campaign. Matters of fact have been disputed, whether or not given things happened, and if they did happen, when and how. Still more naturally have questions of inference and judgment been disputed, under the influence of partisanship, or supposed patriotism, or preconceived ideas. I have deemed it unnecessary to enter into any of these controversies. I have narrated the facts as I believe them to have occurred, without citing evidence, and have left doubtful inferences to the reader. To have done more would have been inconsistent with the scope of this book.]

THE combined efforts of the great powers of Europe overthrew Napoleon early in the year 1814. In spite of amazing efforts on his part, the allied armies marched to Paris; and the emperor, finding himself almost deserted, was compelled to abdicate. The allied powers made the great mistake, as events proved, of allowing him to take possession in full sovereignty of the little island of Elba. A man of more chivalrous spirit would probably have felt that it was a mockery to call him emperor of so minute an empire, and would have preferred to disappear entirely from the observation of a world in which he had risen to so vast a height and fallen so decisively. Napoleon took his small kingdom seriously, and seems to have been contented for a time, until reports of the state of affairs in France led him to think that he might recover his throne. The legitimate line of the Bourbon kings had been restored on Napoleon's overthrow, in the person of Louis XVIII., brother of the king executed in 1793. How far this restoration was acceptable at the time to the French nation as a whole it is difficult to judge. Certainly the knot of selfish politicians who seized the

opportunity of speaking in the name of France desired it for their own ends. Certainly also the allied sovereigns, who for the moment held the fate of France in their hands, most or all of them thought it the most desirable course in the interests of Europe generally. But the Bourbons, like their English forerunners in disaster, had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The great mass of Frenchmen had no wish to lose the great fruits of the Revolution, abolition of aristocratic privilege, limitation of the royal authority, curtailment of the vast influence of the clergy. Still less were they willing to see the crown and the royalist exiles resume possession of the lands of which they had been deprived, and which had mostly been sold to new owners. Least of all were they inclined to allow the rejection, in favour of the Bourbon white flag, of the tricolour which was the emblem alike of the liberty and equality won by the Revolution, and of the military glories won by Napoleon. The king himself seems to have been at least willing to abide by the constitution he had proclaimed, and to accept the great social results of the Revolution; but his brother and destined successor, and many of the restored exiles, made no secret of their desire to revert to the *ancien régime*. Naturally a large amount of discontent was engendered, and of this Napoleon took advantage to try his luck once more. On March 1, 1815, he landed near Cannes with a few hundred followers. The population of the provinces through which his way to Paris lay were on the whole favourable, more so probably than the average of the whole of France. The soldiers could nowhere be induced to fight against the emperor; and many of the officers, though by no means all, set them the example of defection. The king fled into Belgium, and Napoleon marched to Paris in triumph, and resumed the government without a blow.

The allied powers however were in no mind to see their vast sacrifices thrown away, and to allow Napoleon the chance of once more consolidating his power in France, and beginning a fresh series of wars of aggression. Their representatives were still assembled in congress at Vienna, occupied in the difficult task of resettling Europe after the universal removing of landmarks which had been produced by the recent wars. They at once declared Napoleon a

public enemy, and began preparations for launching enormous hosts against him. Months must pass before, in the then state of roads and modes of locomotion, a single Russian soldier could be seen on the French frontier. A shorter, but still considerable, interval must elapse before the Austrian armies could take the field. But England was only across the narrow seas, and Prussia held great territories on the Rhine. Accordingly these two powers, acting in concert, poured their troops, one army under Wellington, the other under Blucher, into the new kingdom of the Netherlands, which had but recently formed part of Napoleon's empire. From the Belgian frontier starts the easiest and shortest line of invasion of France, assuming invasion to be directed at the capital. And the intention was that the English and Prussian armies should take this route, when the Austrians had reached the eastern frontier, and the Russians were getting within supporting distance. Napoleon no doubt realised that his game was lost if his enemies once gathered in their irresistible numbers. At any rate he saw plainly enough that his best chance lay in defeating his opponents piecemeal. Could he succeed in destroying the Anglo-Prussian army, the other powers might be intimidated, or possibly bribed, into letting him alone. The indications are that this would never have happened; the Czar would probably have receded before nothing but overwhelming defeat, and the overthrow of Wellington and Blucher would not have meant the annihilation of the power of Prussia, still less of Great Britain. Nevertheless Napoleon had a chance in this way, and in no other, and he proceeded to try it with characteristic vigour and resolution, though with less than his usual skill and care when the actual stress came.

In order that the campaign may be understood, of which Waterloo was the climax, it must be always remembered that political reasons rendered it essential for Napoleon to assume the offensive in spite of inferior numbers, and offered every inducement to the allies to await attack, and also that this gave Napoleon the great strategical advantage of the initiative. The allies had to guard the Belgian frontier; he could select his own point for invasion. Accordingly the allies occupied a line from east to west, some

thirty miles south of Brussels, and a little north of the actual frontier. The Prussians on the eastern half lay chiefly on the north side of the Meuse and its tributary the Sambre.

Wellington's army was only a third English, another third being Dutch-Belgians of very poor quality and doubtful fidelity,¹ the remainder Germans, some of them excellent troops, the rest mere recruits. He covered the western part of the frontier, as was natural, seeing that he drew his supplies from England by the Belgian ports of Ostend and Antwerp. The two armies met just south of Brussels, near Charleroi, where a main road crosses the Sambre. The allies could not of course know by what route Napoleon, if he assumed the offensive, as was probable, would enter Belgium. They therefore had to watch the whole line; and partly for this reason, partly for convenience of subsistence, they quartered their forces over a space of country fully 100 miles in length from east to west. On the Prussian side, where the rivers formed a protection, and where there was less reason to expect attack, the troops were comparatively near the frontier line. On the English side none except outposts were close to the frontier, and some were at least thirty miles behind it.

Napoleon could bring into the field about 125,000 men, practically all veterans commanded by excellent officers, though the successive re-organisations after his first overthrow and on his restoration had left it lacking in the perfect mutual confidence of officers and men which makes a veteran army so formidable. Of these nearly 24,000 were cavalry; and there were 344 field guns. The Prussians under Blucher were not much inferior in numbers to the French, about 121,000, but their proportion of cavalry (12,000) and guns (312) was lower, and the quality of part at least of the army inferior. Wellington had about 94,000 men, of whom over 14,000 were cavalry, with 196 guns, but, as has been said before, barely half² of them were

¹ Belgium had been for over twenty years annexed to France. Holland had been entirely under French influence almost as long, and annexed to France for six years. Hence the people were either partisans of the French, or in great dread of them.

² In fact this proportion is in some sense far too high. Many of the English had never seen a shot fired, and though they stood on the

really trustworthy troops. Thus Napoleon was nearly equal to his opponents in number of cavalry, but was out-matched in guns in the proportion of about three to two, and in infantry by at least seven to four, though the superior quality of his troops went some way towards compensating for this inequality. He had the further advantage of unity of command, while the armies of the allies not only were separate, with no further concert of action than what the voluntary accord of the chiefs might establish, but drew their supplies from opposite directions, the Prussians from the Rhine, the English from the Belgian ports. Both sides seem to have been fairly well informed as to the strength of the other. Napoleon also had information as to the position of the allied troops, nor were Wellington and Blucher quite in the dark when the French troops concentrated on the frontier, skilfully as Napoleon had arranged their movements, though they could not at first be certain what was real attack, what feint.

Napoleon had practically a choice between two plans. He might invade Belgium on the west, opposite the right of Wellington's widely divided army, and by advancing northwards cut Wellington off from his communication with the sea. This was what Wellington expected; he was very anxious about his supplies, being probably more than doubtful whether his army would find subsistence if compelled to depend on the Prussians, who had quite enough to do in supplying their own army. A corresponding movement on the left of the Prussians was obviously possible, but for many reasons not worth Napoleon's while. The alternative plan, which he adopted, and which all critics consider to have been the best open to him, was to concentrate his army due south of Brussels, at the nearest point to that capital, and cross the Sambre at Charleroi, which would bring him on the point where the English and Prussian armies met. Napoleon knew that the Prussian forces were less dispersed, and generally nearer the frontier than those of Wellington. He therefore calculated that if, as was probable, Blucher concentrated his army for battle,

defensive with admirable steadiness, it is at least doubtful whether they would have been effective for manœuvring.

it would be at a point comparatively near to Charleroi, and that Wellington could not be in time to give him serious assistance. He further calculated that Blucher, if defeated, would retreat eastwards in the direction of his proper line of communication, and that then Wellington ought to be an easy prey to the French army, superior in both numbers and quality.

Accordingly Napoleon issued orders that his whole army should move at dawn on June 15, and cross the Sambre at or near Charleroi. At the same time he ordered slight demonstrations to be made much further west, in the neighbourhood of Mons, in order that Wellington might be kept as long as possible in doubt as to what Napoleon's real purpose was. Ziethen, who commanded the Prussian corps nearest to Charleroi, had unaccountably taken no steps to destroy the bridges over the Sambre, which would have delayed the French greatly : but he disputed their advance with much skill and pertinacity, and slowly retired north-eastwards to Fleurus. Blucher had on the night of June 14, on receiving certain tidings that the French were in great force beyond the Sambre, ordered his whole army to concentrate at Sombref, four or five miles behind Fleurus, at the point where the road from Charleroi crosses the great high-road that runs a little north of west from Namur to Nivelles, and thence towards the coast. It was at this point that it had been agreed between the allies, some weeks before, that the Prussians should concentrate in case of an advance by Napoleon, which they then thought improbable. One of the four Prussian corps, that of Bulow, was at a great distance, and failed to arrive in time ; but those of Pirch and Thielemann duly joined Ziethen. On the 16th Blucher, with nearly 90,000 men, took up a position at Ligny, a mile or so south of the great Namur road, and awaited attack. Napoleon's intention had been to bring his whole army across the Sambre on the 15th, to occupy Fleurus in force, in anticipation of battle with Blucher, and to send a detachment to Quatre-Bras, where the Charleroi-Brussels road crosses the Namur-Nivelles road, in order to intercept the main line of communication between Wellington and Blucher. This was only approximately carried out : at nightfall, some French divisions were still on the wrong side

of the Sambre. Quatre-Bras was found to be occupied, and the French left therefore did not go beyond Frasné, two or three miles to the south; and Ziethen's rear-guard still held Fleurus. The difference was of no serious consequence, the less so as the allied generals played into Napoleon's hands, Blücher by committing himself to battle with only three-fourths of his army and with no assurance of assistance from his colleague, Wellington by his slowness in concentrating his army. The English general, ill served as to intelligence, only heard the news of the French advance in the afternoon: even then, slow to abandon his belief that Napoleon would try to cut him off from the sea, he only warned his troops to be ready. In the evening he ordered concentration on Nivelles, and not till the morning of the 16th did he direct movements on Quatre-Bras.¹

On the morning of June 16 Napoleon was in no hurry to move. He had entrusted Ney with the command of his left wing, and given him orders to attack the English at Quatre-Bras. There was much delay, which seems attributable partly to Ney's doing nothing to hasten the march (he had only joined the army on the 15th and had no staff), and partly to the remissness of the corps commanders, Reille and D'Erlon. About two o'clock however he began, with Reille's corps only, the battle of Quatre-Bras. It was extremely fortunate for Wellington that Ney had not moved earlier, for the position at daybreak was only held by one brigade, and it was but slowly that fresh troops came up. At first the French seemed likely to carry all before them: the Dutch-Belgian troops suffered severely, and some of them fled. No reader of *Vanity Fair* can have forgotten Thackeray's description of the panic caused in Brussels by the arrival of these fugitives,

¹ During the interval the duke of Wellington attended the famous ball at Brussels given by the duchess of Richmond. It is always a pity to spoil a romantic story; but the idea derived from the beautiful description in 'Childe Harold,' and probably still believed by the majority of those who have not studied the history, that the first intimation of the French advance was given by the sound of distant cannon heard at the ball, is contrary to all the facts. Wellington, having given his orders, went to the ball in order to prevent alarm spreading in Brussels: there was no firing during the night, none in fact, that could have been heard at that distance, till the following afternoon.

reporting that the allied army was cut to pieces. The Brunswick division was also broken for the time, and their duke killed.¹ But reinforcements came up in succession, and Wellington, who was on the field in person, grew relatively stronger as evening approached, and foiled every effort Ney made. Why Ney did not make greater efforts, why especially he made so little use of his cavalry, of which arm Wellington had very few on the field, is hard to say. Possibly his Peninsular experiences made him feel convinced that Wellington would not risk a battle without adequate strength. Certainly the woods interfered with his seeing fully the amount of Wellington's force. The absence of D'Erlon's corps was, as will appear presently, no fault of his, except so far as he was responsible for not having brought D'Erlon up to the front in the morning. At any rate he failed: at nightfall on the 16th the French were at Frasne, the English at Quatre-Bras, as they had been on the night of the 15th; only each side had lost between 4000 and 5000 men, the English rather more than the French.

Meanwhile Napoleon had taken for granted that Ney would be able to dislodge the English,² and had not only told him how far to advance on the Brussels road, but had also ordered him to despatch part of his troops, as soon as Quatre-Bras was occupied, down the Namur road, to cooperate in his own attack on the Prussians. He had waited until Ney was engaged before beginning his own battle, which he did not doubt winning, and hoped by Ney's aid to render decisive. On the Prussian left Thielemann's corps covered the road to Namur: the centre and right, formed by Ziethen's corps, with Pirch in second line, were thrown forward almost at a right angle to the left, behind the villages of Ligny and St. Amand, so as to cover the same road further west, by which communication was to be kept up with Wellington. The duke had seen Blucher in

¹ The duke's father had also been killed in battle against Napoleon, at Jena. After Quatre-Bras the Brunswick troops wore black uniforms with skull and crossbone badges, in token of mourning, until their young duke came of age.

² This would doubtless have happened if the whole of Ney's nominal command had been united. Napoleon however seems to have expected that Quatre-Bras would not be held by any serious force.

the morning, and had promised to assist the Prussians if not himself attacked. Thus both French and Prussians were hoping at least for help from Quatre-Bras, which neither combatant there was in any condition to afford. Napoleon decided to begin by assailing the Prussian right: for this he had every motive, as it was unprotected by any natural obstacle, and success there would not only tend to separate Blucher from Wellington, but would also drive Blucher to retreat towards Namur, which Napoleon naturally desired. His plan however aimed at a much more decisive stroke. He had determined, after the Prussian right had been shaken by some hours of fighting, to assail the centre with his reserve. If that attack succeeded, and one of Ney's corps took the Prussians in rear, as was to be done when Quatre-Bras had been won, half of the Prussian army would be virtually surrounded, and must either be destroyed or surrender. The fighting all through was of a most desperate character, but the French had, on the whole, the best of it, and Napoleon was preparing for his attack on the centre, when the news that a considerable body of troops were in sight a couple of miles or so on his left, naturally caused him to wait. They might be Wellington's, in which case caution was obviously expedient: they might be Ney's expected succour appearing in the wrong place, in which case time would be needed for them to work round the flank of the Prussians. It had just been ascertained that the approaching troops were French, when they suddenly halted and began to return the way they had come. They were D'Erlon's corps, which had been on their way to join Ney, and had been directed towards the field of Ligny, apparently by a staff officer who thought he was rightly interpreting Napoleon's wishes. Ney, on hearing what had happened, very properly recalled D'Erlon: his orders were to dislodge the English from Quatre-Bras, which he could not do without D'Erlon's troops, and then, but not till then, to reinforce Napoleon. The result however was that D'Erlon's corps wasted the day in marching to and fro, and took part in neither battle, though its active co-operation ought to have been decisive on either field.

Sunset was approaching, and Napoleon, seeing that it

was too late to send effective orders after D'Erlon, made his attack on the Prussian centre as before arranged. Its success gave him an undoubted victory, but dearly bought, and not overwhelming. The Prussians were able to retreat unmolested under cover of the darkness, leaving behind them over 20,000 men, killed, wounded and prisoners, or about a third of the two corps, Ziethen's and Pirch's, on which the stress of the fighting had fallen. The French army bivouacked on the field how they could: their loss had amounted to 11,000 or 12,000 men.

Thus up to nightfall on June 16 Napoleon had gained considerable success. He had attained his first object, of engaging and defeating Blucher before Wellington could come to his assistance, and might reasonably expect to attain his second object, of attacking Wellington with his main force while separated from the Prussians, in which case with a superior army he ought to win a decisive victory. That more had not been achieved was due to the delay on the French left, which neutralised the advantage resulting from Wellington's undue slowness in concentrating his army. As often happens in war, one mistake but cancelled the other. On the 17th most part of the advantage which the French possessed over the allies was lost, largely by Napoleon's own fault, partly by the loyal co-operation of Blucher and Wellington. Critics who treat war like a game of chess, and forget that soldiers are men who must eat and sleep, say that Napoleon ought to have started at daybreak, to take Wellington at Quatre-Bras in flank, while Ney renewed the attack in front. But the emperor himself was exhausted by two extremely long and fatiguing days: nor could even the troops that had taken but little part in a battle ending at 9.30 p.m. be expected to be in marching order again in six hours. Napoleon made the grievous mistake of taking for granted two things, both of them likely, but neither of them in fact true. First he more or less assumed that Wellington, informed of the result of the battle of Ligny, would have retreated, leaving only a rear-guard at Quatre-Bras; if this were so, there was no use in Napoleon's trying to attack him. As a matter of fact, Wellington did not receive the news of Ligny till the morning of the 17th, and he then waited to exchange com-

munications with Blucher before ordering a retreat, for which there was no immediate hurry, unless the French resumed the offensive. Napoleon's other and far more disastrous mistake was taking for granted that Blucher had retreated on Namur, that is to say straight away from his ally. As a matter of fact the Prussians were retreating northwards on Wavre, true to the general agreement between Blucher and Wellington that they would co-operate as thoroughly as possible; and since that movement was ordered, news had come from Wellington that he was on the point of retreating on Waterloo, and would stand to fight there if assured of assistance from one Prussian corps. Napoleon had plenty of cavalry available, for Ligny was essentially an infantry battle, and certainly ought to have pushed cavalry along every road by which the Prussians could possibly have retreated. If they were gone eastwards, as he hoped and believed, all was plain sailing: if they were gone north, they might still unite with Wellington, and the game was by no means won. As it was, he contented himself with one reconnaissance along the Namur road, which confirmed him in his error by capturing a few stragglers, and so threw away the advantages gained already by his skilfully-devised plan of campaign.

In the course of the morning of the 17th, Wellington withdrew his forces from Quatre-Bras, and retreated to the position at Waterloo which he had noted the year before, as an excellent one for a defensive battle to protect Brussels. In the afternoon heavy rain came on, which lasted all night, soaking the ground, seriously injuring the roads, and thus interfering with the march of the French, who followed at some distance. By nightfall the French were in front of Wellington's position; and both armies bivouacked on the wet ground, no very favourable preparation for the work of the morrow. Before moving from Ligny with the guard and Lobau's corps, to unite them to the troops under Ney, and with the whole body follow up the retreating English, Napoleon had given his orders for the pursuit of the defeated Prussians. Marshal Grouchy was put at the head of the two corps, Vandamme's and Gérard's, on which the stress of the fighting at Ligny had fallen, which with some cavalry amounted to about 33,000 men.

Napoleon after the event attempted to make Grouchy entirely responsible for the loss of the battle of Waterloo, and Napoleon's partisans have followed his example. A few writers have exempted Grouchy from all blame: the majority of reasonably impartial critics blame him more or less severely, though without holding Napoleon faultless. In any case the absence of Grouchy at Waterloo, without his thereby preventing Blucher from participating, was a decisive fact, however it was brought about. Hence it is necessary to understand clearly what his intentions were, and what was the discretionary power left to him. In personal conversation Napoleon told Grouchy that he was himself going to fight the English "if they will stand on this side of the forest of Soignies," and ordered him to pursue the Prussians and complete their defeat by attacking them as soon as he came up with them: and it is clear that he then still supposed the Prussians to have retreated on Namur, and therefore that the pursuit of them was not a matter of primary importance. Afterwards he heard news which implied the probability that part at least of the Prussian army might have gone further north: and he sent Grouchy written orders to take his forces to Gembloux (N.E. from Ligny), explore in the direction of Namur and of Maestricht (still further to N.E.), and find out what the Prussians were doing, whether they were or were not intending to unite with the English, to cover Brussels or Liège,¹ and try another battle. These orders still treat as most probable the separation of the Prussians from Wellington, but they contemplate the other possibility—they do not however tell Grouchy what to do in that event. Unfortunately for Napoleon, Grouchy was without experience in independent command, of rather limited range of ideas, and sharing the abject dread of disobeying Napoleon which cramped the energy and clouded the judgment, at times if not always, of most of his generals. He was capable enough, as he showed when left altogether to himself after the rout of Waterloo; but so long as he was under Napoleon's orders, he dared not think for himself. Grouchy

¹ The mention of Liège shows how vague the Emperor's ideas were at the moment; it is hard to see how Wellington, known to be moving straight north on Brussels, could take a position to cover Liège.

accordingly marched to Gembloux : and having ascertained beyond further doubt that the Prussians had not gone to Namur, but that part of them had gone north to Wavre, and the main body as he believed north-eastward towards Maestricht, he reported this late at night to Napoleon, adding his intention to follow the enemy, if it turned out after all that they were moving on Wavre, "in order to prevent their gaining Brussels and to separate them from Wellington." As a matter of fact, the whole Prussian army had gained Wavre, in accordance with the agreement between Blucher and Wellington, in order to be able to support Wellington on the next day. That there existed between the two allied generals a substantial and hearty accord is certain enough, though Gneisenau, who was Blucher's chief of staff, always suspicious of Wellington, was inclined to doubt his sincerity, and to take care of the Prussian army only, not of the common cause. These suspicions were in fact groundless, and were very bad policy also ; Gneisenau reminds one of a whist-player who plays for his own hand and will not co-operate with his partner, a style of play which is equivalent to giving the other side odds. That Gneisenau was overruled, that the co-operation was carried through to a triumphant end, was due to Marshal Blucher personally, a man far inferior to Gneisenau in military ability, but stanch to the backbone, and moreover hating the French with a keen personal hatred.

On the morning of the 18th Grouchy moved on Wavre : the hour named for starting was not a very early one, as it would have been if Grouchy had deemed time of great importance ; and the troops, doubtless still feeling the effects of Ligny, in spite of an easy day's work on the 17th, were slow to get into motion. About eleven o'clock, while Grouchy was halting to eat at Walhain, about one-third of the way to Wavre, the opening cannonade of the battle of Waterloo was heard. General Gérard at once urged him to "march towards the cannon," and a vehement discussion arose, which ended in Grouchy deciding to obey what he averred to be the emperor's orders, and continue his march on Wavre. That Grouchy ought to have crossed the Dyle at once, cannot reasonably be doubted : if Blucher gave large assistance to Wellington, the emperor must be overwhelmed,

and there was no means of preventing this, if Grouchy failed in achieving it. True, Blucher might not be sending any large force across from Wavre to Waterloo, but if he were not, Grouchy would have discovered this eventually, and might have pushed on Wavre as easily from the south-west as from the south. If however, as was actually the case, the bulk of the Prussian army was moving to support Wellington and take the French in flank, there would be little compensation for Napoleon's total defeat to be derived from a slight success of Grouchy at Wavre. The marshal however could not rise to the opportunity, he dared not depart from what he understood to be the purpose of his master. And it may pretty confidently be conjectured that in a different case, had Napoleon beaten Wellington before Blucher could come up, and had Grouchy's march towards the cannon left it feasible for Blucher to unite with Wellington before Brussels, Grouchy would have been blamed without mercy.

It remains to be seen whether Grouchy, acting on Gérard's advice, could have saved the defeat of Waterloo. He had to take 33,000 men with all their guns and ammunition waggons across the river Dyle, by two bridges, one narrow and steep, the other of wood and presumably not strong enough for artillery. He had to march fourteen or fifteen miles by very bad country roads, rendered much worse by the rain. The Prussians from Wavre had a shorter distance to go with no river to cross, and the foremost corps, Bulow's, had considerably the start: the head of his column was in sight of the battle-field when Grouchy's resolution was taken. Moreover one corps, Ziethen's, took a parallel road further to the north, entirely out of Grouchy's reach. It is pretty certain that if Grouchy had marched on Waterloo, he would have prevented Pirch's corps, which followed Bulow's, from taking part in the battle, and so would have rendered the rout a little less absolute. It is pretty certain also that Bulow need have taken no notice of him, but it is not so clear that he might not have been sufficiently disquieted by Grouchy's appearance to think it expedient to turn back and encounter him. Blucher however was with Bulow's corps, and he was eager to press forward, at whatever cost. If Napoleon had been in Blucher's place, he would have seen

that the defeat of the enemy's main army was of primary importance, and would have taken his chance of Grouchy achieving some success against the Prussians left behind. It is however unprofitable to conjecture what might have been. Happily for Wellington and for Europe, Grouchy was afraid to face the responsibility, and marched on Wavre. Here, to finish his story, he encountered Thielemann's corps, left to play against him the very game which Napoleon intended him to play against the whole Prussian army, to detain and occupy as much as possible a superior force. There was some fighting on the evening of the 18th, and again on the next morning, to the advantage of the French. But when Grouchy heard of the total defeat of the emperor, he naturally thought only of regaining France. His retreat was conducted with skill and audacity, and ended, thanks to the protection afforded him in crossing the Meuse by the fortifications of Namur, in his reaching French territory with his army unbroken.

When Napoleon and Wellington stood at length face to face on the night of June 17, both were naturally anxious about the morrow, but in singularly different ways. The emperor, justly believing that his army was the better of the two, was only afraid that Wellington might yet rob him of victory by decamping in the dark; and this fear haunted him so obstinately that in the middle of the night, and again at daybreak, he rode out to satisfy his own eyes that the English army was still in position. Strangely enough he does not seem to have been at all apprehensive of the contingency which in fact happened to his ruin: he still supposed the Prussian army out of reach. On the morning of the 18th he sent a despatch to Grouchy, which accepted as the right thing to be done that general's intention of marching on Wavre. Not till eleven a.m., when the battle was on the point of beginning, did he send a regiment¹ of cavalry towards the bridges by which Grouchy would have had to cross the Dyle, as if that were a chance worth taking account of. But he took no steps to secure Grouchy's coming, till the first Prussian troops were in sight,² as he

¹ This regiment was commanded by Marbot, whose memoirs attracted so much attention when published in 1891.

² Those who say that Waterloo was lost by Grouchy's fault have to

certainly would have done had he seriously feared Blucher taking him in flank. And this reduplication of the grievous mistake he had made on the field of Ligny was absolutely fatal.

Wellington on the other hand had fully made up his mind to fight, in spite of the great risk he ran of being overwhelmed before the Prussians could reach him, assuming always that Blucher would come to his assistance. How great that risk was, it is a little hard to realise after the event. He could have no knowledge of the amount of Grouchy's army, though he may well have guessed that Napoleon had detached some troops to observe the Prussians. For all he knew the French might be outnumbering him considerably, the more so as he still deemed it necessary to guard his right by leaving a large force at Hal, some ten or twelve miles off. Napoleon made a miscalculation, as most critics think, in giving Grouchy so large a force. If Grouchy was merely to follow up the Prussians retreating eastwards, less would suffice : if the emperor was to encounter at Waterloo the allied armies united, he needed every man. And Wellington made a similar miscalculation in leaving 18,000 men at Hal : if he was beaten at Waterloo, there would be no longer a flank to guard ; if he was successful, a French detachment sent to turn his flank would have great difficulty in escaping destruction. Even on the assumption that Wellington knew the strength of the army facing him, he was outmatched so long as he stood alone : and what was his security for being supported ? It has been said already that he and Blucher acted cordially together, but there was not, and could not be, a common plan of action worked out in detail. The very fact that they had to await attack, wherever Napoleon might assail them, rendered any such elaborate concert impossible. Moreover Wellington was doubtless aware that Gneisenau would be slow to take a

get over the fact that Napoleon took no steps, till it was far too late, to summon him thither. The emperor knew that Wellington was standing to fight, Grouchy could only guess. Suppose Gneisenau's suspicions had been realised, and Wellington had retreated, and the cannon had been Napoleon attacking Blucher *vis-à-vis* St. Lambert, Grouchy would, by crossing the Dyle, have lost the chance of annihilating the Prussians.

course that endangered the Prussians. If after all the Prussians were not coming, there was yet time to retreat from an untenable position. Under the pressure of this anxiety, Wellington is said to have spent a great part of the night in riding over to Wavre and back, in order to see Blucher and make sure. Whatever passed at that interview,¹ the duke was satisfied, and on the fateful morning of the 18th, his troops stood to their arms in the stations already assigned to them.

The field of Waterloo has probably been visited by more travellers than any other battle-field in the world: but its aspect has been changed in some respects since 1815, so that the description to be given of it will not be found to tally exactly with what is to be seen to-day. Wellington's army was posted on a slight ridge, running about east and west, and occupied a front of over two miles. The ridge is crossed about the centre of the position by the high road from Charleroi to Brussels, and a country road runs along it, a little below the top on the southern side. Less than three miles to the northward the Brussels road enters the forest of Soignies; and Wellington calculated that this would protect him in case of defeat. There were roads enough to withdraw the artillery, &c.; and the forest, being thick but free of underwood, would present no obstacle to infantry retiring, and would assist them in keeping off pursuit. At the extreme western end of the ridge lies a small village called Merbe Braine, somewhat sunk in a hollow: this protected Wellington's extreme right from being easily turned. The front of his right was covered by the chateau of Hougomont, a good-sized country house with gardens and orchard, enclosed by a wall. This lay down in the valley separating the two armies; and it is obvious that

¹ Wellington is said to have told the story of his midnight ride about twenty years afterwards, *à propos* of his famous horse Copenhagen. He was not the kind of man to invent such a story, and his well-known reticence about Waterloo would fully account for the incident remaining unknown. On the other hand its intrinsic improbability is so great, that it can hardly be accepted without cogent evidence. The testimony however is altogether at second-hand, though quite precise enough to warrant belief in an ordinary way; but it is obviously reasonable to require something more for a story which would sound scarcely credible if told of any commander-in-chief, and is specially at variance with Wellington's cool and prudent disposition.

no attack could be made on Wellington's right unless the assailants had first seized this château, while on the other hand their possession of Hougomont would have given them great facilities for further advance. Similarly, in advance of Wellington's left, lay two farms, La Haye and Papelotte, and a little hamlet called Smohain, but the ground gave no protection to the left flank of the position. Close to the Charleroi-Brussels road, near the bottom of the slope lies the farm of La Haye Sainte; this also formed some little protection to the centre. The ground was practically all open, and the slope down into the little valley that divided the two armies before the battle not very steep, but still an unmistakable descent. The slope up the opposite side was at about the same inclination, so that the fronts of the two armies, a little over three-quarters of a mile apart, lay on two roughly parallel ridges. The English ridge was narrow enough for it to be feasible to place the troops, when not actually standing to repel attack, on the reverse or northern slope leading towards the village of Waterloo, so that they were partially sheltered from the French artillery. To complete the picture of Wellington's position, it is necessary to add that the road which runs along it leads to Ohain and thence to Wavre: this was one of the routes by which Prussian succour might come, and was in fact the road by which Ziethen arrived shortly before the close of the battle. The shortest way from Wavre, by which the first Prussians came, leads through the valley and up against the eastern end of the French line.

The position was an excellent one for defence, considering the range of artillery and infantry fire of that date, and would have fully compensated for the slight advantage of numbers which Napoleon possessed, had the quality of the two armies been equal. They were substantially equal in infantry, a little under 50,000 each: but Napoleon had 15,000 cavalry as against 12,000, and many more guns, 246 to 156. Wellington however could not place much reliance on the Dutch-Belgian contingent, nearly 18,000 strong. The sympathies of many of them were with the French, and none of them had seen service, unless perchance in the emperor's army before his first abdication. Consequently the duke thought it expedient to distribute these troops among the

English and Germans: he would obviously have done better, assuming that he was convinced of the necessity of leaving a strong body at Hal, to have posted none but Dutch and Belgians there, the more so as the command at Hal was entrusted to a Dutch prince, and to have had Colville's English on the field of Waterloo.

Wellington's army was distributed as follows, the front being generally behind the country road from Wavre. On the extreme left, which was unprotected by any natural features, were two brigades of light cavalry, Vivian's and Vandeleur's. Next came two Hanoverian brigades, Vincke's and Best's: then, a little further back, Pack's brigade consisting of the 1st, 42nd, 44th and 92nd British regiments. To the right of Pack, extending as far as the high road, was Kempt's brigade, comprising the 28th, 32nd, 79th and 1st battalion 95th. A Dutch-Belgian division was posted in front of this, the left half of the line. One brigade occupied the hamlet and farms that partially protected the front: the other, Bylandt's, was posted on the slope facing the south, where it was exposed to crushing fire from the French artillery, which so shook it that early in the battle it gave way, retired in confusion over the ridge, and could be used no more. This was almost the only mistake made by Wellington in the actual tactics of the battle: one other only can be cited against him, and that as it happened was in the same part of the field. The farm of La Haye Sainte, a large courtyard with solid walls and buildings round it, just on the high road and protecting the very centre of the whole position, was garrisoned but slightly, and was not prepared for defence, nor were the troops in it supplied, as they should have been, with ample stores of ammunition. La Haye Sainte was garrisoned from one of two German brigades, Ompteda's and Kielmansegge's, which lay immediately to the right of the high road. Next to them came Sir Colin Halkett's English, these three brigades forming Count Alten's division. To the right, more or less behind Hougomont, and furnishing a great part of its garrison, was posted General Cooke's division, consisting of Maitland's and Byng's brigades of guards. To the right of the guards, Mitchell's English brigade lined the cross road which runs north-west from near Hougomont to Braine-la-Leud, a couple of miles

off, where a Belgian division was posted ; they thus guarded the right of the position. In rear of the guards lay Clinton's division, one brigade of which, Adam's, played a very important part in the last stage of the battle : this division was well placed to act as a reserve for any part of the line. The regular reserve of about 10,000 men, of which over one-third were cavalry, was placed a mile or so in rear of the centre. The rest of the cavalry formed a second line in rear of the right and centre, the heavy cavalry, Somerset's brigade of guards and Ponsonby's Union brigade (the Royal Dragoons, Scots Greys, and Inniskillings), being close to right and left of the high road. The artillery was not massed together after the fashion which has generally prevailed in recent wars ; the field batteries were distributed along the front, in the proportion of about one battery to each brigade, and the horse artillery was similarly joined to the cavalry. It remains to add that Hougomont had been very fully prepared for defence. The entire property, about one-third of a mile square, was generally enclosed only with hedges : but the farmyard and garden adjoining the house in the north-west corner had good walls : and the orchard at the north-east had also a wall on the north, which enabled the defenders to drive the French out of the orchard again, when once they penetrated to it.

As the French army were the assailants, it is needless to describe with any particularity their original formation. The first line, consisting of D'Erlon's corps on the right, and Reille's on the left, faced the English on rather a longer extent, with their powerful artillery ranged in front of the infantry, their left being thrown rather forward so as to envelop Hougomont. Behind were the cavalry in a double line. On the Charleroi road, in rear of the centre, Lobau's corps was drawn up in close columns. Further back again was Napoleon's guard of all arms to serve as the last reserve. About half a mile to the east of the position of the guard, nearly a mile behind the right front of the French, is the village of Planchenoit : it is obvious that when late in the battle the Prussians reached Planchenoit, they were attacking the French at a most dangerous point, as they threatened to cut off nearly the whole army, for which the Charleroi road was the only line of retreat.

If Napoleon had even surmised that one Prussian corps had started at daybreak to join Wellington, and that two others were to follow, he would assuredly have begun the battle of Waterloo some hours earlier than he in fact did. The rain had ceased in the night, but the ground was soaked, and the artillery could hardly move until it had dried a little. The emperor, confident of victory, was in no hurry. To quote his own account given at St. Helena—At eight o'clock, during his breakfast, the emperor said: "The enemy's army is superior in numbers by at least one-fourth ;¹ nevertheless we have at least ninety chances in a hundred in our favour." Ney at this moment came up to announce that Wellington was in full retreat.² "You are mistaken," replied the emperor, "he has no longer time, he would expose himself to certain destruction." About nine o'clock the French army began to take up its position for the coming battle. Every movement was visible to the English line, and formed a superb spectacle: indeed it is suggested that Napoleon expected by this display, which continued for some two hours before the signal was given, to impress the Belgians in Wellington's army, already half-hearted to say the least. There was always a touch of the theatrical in Napoleon's character, and it came out conspicuously before this, his last battle. To Wellington, who relied for victory on the co-operation of the Prussians, still a long way off, every minute's delay must have been an additional reason for trusting that his bold venture would succeed.

The battle began at 11.30 with a cannonade along the whole line, and an attack on Hougomont made by a division of Reille's corps commanded by Napoleon's brother Jerome. It is obvious that, whatever the general plan of the battle might be, Hougomont, which projected like a bastion from Wellington's line, must be attacked, if only to prevent its garrison from firing into the flank of any columns that

¹ This was entirely untrue in fact, as we have seen, but if the troops at Hal had been on the field it would have been nearly true. Napoleon could only have guessed, as the ground concealed a great part of Wellington's army: this is not one of the deliberate falsehoods of which he was only too commonly guilty.

² It is impossible to conjecture what put this idea into Ney's mind, as the English army had bivouacked in very nearly the order of battle, and had therefore not moved in the morning.

might assail the English centre. But it is also obvious that Hougomont, unless weakly held, could not be taken except at very great cost, and that success there would not be nearly so valuable as elsewhere. Every man lost in assailing Hougomont, beyond what was necessary for keeping the English right employed, was wasted. But Reille, and the generals under him, failed to realise this, and the whole of the corps was drawn into the conflict. The fighting was of the most desperate character, especially at first, and was renewed at intervals, but the French never succeeded in penetrating the house or walled garden. Hougomont was in fact worth many thousands of men to Wellington.

The map shows plainly that the part of Wellington's line where a successful attack would be most ruinous was near the centre. A comparatively small part of his army stood east of the high-road: if the centre could be pierced, the left might be destroyed, and the right, cut off from the great road, would have to retreat how it could, leaving the way to Brussels open, and losing all chance of connection with Blucher. Wellington's reserves were naturally behind the centre: but it was here if anywhere that the French could gain the battle, and it was here, as it happened, that Wellington had failed to utilise La Haye Sainte. During the first two hours of the battle the French merely cannonaded this part of the line: their artillery was half as strong again as the English, but the infantry were partially protected by lying down on the northern side of the ridge they held, and were not seriously shaken, except Bylandt's brigade.

About 1.30 began the first great attack on the English centre, the whole of D'Erlon's corps advancing together. Durutte's division on the right succeeded in getting temporary possession of Papelotte. Donzelot on the left seized the orchard and garden of La Haye Sainte, and a body of heavy cavalry on his left flank nearly destroyed a Hanoverian battalion that attempted to reinforce the farm. The two centre divisions, with Donzelot's second brigade on their left and a little ahead, advanced in columns of unusually close and cumbrous formation. Bylandt's brigade gave way in confusion, but Kempt's and Pack's stood firm in their places. As the French halted close to the English line, and attempted to deploy, Picton, who commanded the English

division, ordered Kempt's brigade to fire a volley, and charge. Picton was shot dead, but the left column of the French was driven back in utter rout. Meanwhile Marcognet's division was pressing Pack hard, and Alix's was forcing its way between Kempt and Pack. At this juncture Lord Uxbridge ordered forward the English heavy cavalry. The household brigade charged the French cuirassiers as they came up the slope from La Haye Sainte, and completely defeated them. The Union brigade charged and drove back with great loss the French divisions which were pressing on, but which in their crowded formation were almost helpless against cavalry well led. Continuing its career, Ponsonby's brigade attacked the French artillery on the opposite slope (74 guns were here massed together), and inflicted considerable loss, but being charged in its turn by fresh French cavalry, was badly cut up. The defeat of the central columns carried with it the repulse or withdrawal of the flanks, so that this great attack attained absolutely nothing. Wellington however found it necessary to order up a brigade from his reserve, to fill the gap in his front formed by the flight of the Belgians and the losses in Kempt's and Pack's brigades.

Meanwhile Blucher had been doing his best. The country between Wavre and the battle-field is formed in rounded hills and deep hollows, traversed by mere lanes, and the soil was soft and miry from the heavy rain. At noon Bulow's leading division reached St. Lambert, the highest point on the road, whence the battle-field was visible at some four miles' distance: Napoleon within an hour ascertained that they were Prussians, and too late recognising his danger, sent off a useless despatch to summon Grouchy to his aid. He also sent some cavalry to meet the Prussians, but it was not for at least two hours more that the latter came into action. The roads naturally grew worse with use, and the artillery could scarcely be moved at all. It needed all the energy of hatred which inspired the whole Prussian army, it needed all the pressure Blucher in person could put on the soldiers, for the task to be accomplished. "Kinder, ihr wollt doch nicht dass ich wortbrüchig werden soll," was the old marshal's often repeated appeal: and Englishmen ought never to forget it. At length Bulow was strong enough to push down into

the valley, and occupy the wood of Pâris, whence he could assail Planchenoit. If he succeeded in this, the French would be defeated in a most ruinous fashion. Hence Napoleon not only sent Lobau's corps to face the Prussians, but himself attended to the new danger.

After the repulse of D'Erlon the main action languished, only the cannonade and the fighting before Hougomont continuing, till about four o'clock, when the second main attack began. Forty squadrons of heavy cavalry charged up between Hougomont and La Haye Sainte, against Alten's division, which formed promptly in squares, placed in a double line chess-board fashion, so that the maximum of fire¹ could be poured into the charging horsemen. The guns in front of the English line were necessarily abandoned, but the French could make no impression on the squares, and when in confusion were driven off by cavalry from the English reserves. Again and again the attempt was renewed with the same result, till even the English privates saw how hopeless it was. "Here come these fools again," some of them called out, as a new charge was made. And indeed it is hard to see why they were made: Wellington's line was not broken, or even shaken as yet. Probably the impatience of Ney was to blame, Napoleon being then at a distance engaged with the Prussians. At any rate the net result was the destruction of a great part of the French cavalry, at some cost to Wellington's cavalry, but not much to his infantry, except from the French guns which told with deadly effect on the squares in the intervals of the cavalry charges.

Almost before the first repulse of the French cavalry, a new infantry attack on the British centre was arranged, which was to be directed primarily on La Haye Sainte. Ney it is said asked the emperor for reinforcements, seeing how badly D'Erlon's corps had been cut up in the first attack. "Where am I to get them?" replied the emperor, "voulez-vous que j'en fasse?" In fact not only Lobau's corps, but a part of the guard, Napoleon's last reserve, had been already required to keep Blücher at bay, who as-

¹ It must be remembered that the range of the musket was very short, so that the bullets could hardly do mischief in neighbouring squares if they missed the cavalry.

sailed Planchenoit again and again, though without success. Nevertheless this attack on Wellington's centre attained a greater measure of success than any other during the day. La Haye Sainte was seized after a desperate struggle: and the French infantry, and still more their artillery, established there, nearly destroyed the third division on the left and Kempt's brigade on the right, opening a most dangerous gap in the English line. Wellington's coolness and judgment had never failed him for a moment; to demands for reinforcements he had replied again and again, "It is impossible, you must hold your ground to the last man," and nobly had the English and Germans responded to the demands made on them. Hence at this dangerous crisis there were still infantry reserves in rear of the centre, which Wellington brought up in person to restore the line, simultaneously drawing in to the centre Chasse's Belgians from behind the right, and the two light cavalry brigades from the extreme left, where Blucher's right was now in touch with Wellington through Smohain, and Ziethen's corps, coming by the upper road from Wavre, was rapidly approaching. Napoleon's last reserve, his famous old guard, must be used to make the last bid for victory. If this had been directed on the same point, for the sake of the protection afforded by La Haye Sainte, some further success might have perhaps been achieved, but by this time nothing could have saved the French from defeat. Pirch was up in rear of Bulow, who was again pressing hard on Planchenoit, and Ziethen inflicted a crushing blow on D'Erlon's corps, which advanced to attack Wellington's left by way of supporting the charge of the guard in the centre. The guard was formed in two columns: the right, somewhat in advance of the left, came up the slope to the left of La Haye Sainte, against Maitland's brigade of guards, which had hitherto had no fighting to do, and was lying down for shelter from the cannonade, which had been continued to the last moment over the heads of the advancing infantry. The crushing fire of the English guards swept away the head of this column; it fell into confusion in attempting to deploy, and an advance of Maitland drove it back in disorder. Maitland had only just time to recover his position before the left column of the old guard was upon

him. Their defeat however was to come not from him, but from his right flank. Adam's brigade, originally placed in rear of the guards, had been brought forward to fill the place of Byng's brigade, which had been nearly destroyed in the defence of Hougomont during eight hours of almost incessant fighting against very superior numbers. The slope of the ground threw their line somewhat forward at an angle to Maitland's front; and Colonel Colborne, commanding the famous 52nd, wheeled his regiment a little further, so that it took the French guard in flank, stopping its advance, and throwing it into great disorder. Then was seen an illustration almost more marked than that at Albuera, of what line can do against column. Colborne's line advancing routed the four battalions of the French guard; then continuing diagonally across the slope to the high-road came upon the other part of the guard, which had been formed up there in columns after its repulse by Maitland. Wellington, who was on the spot, having just ordered a general advance of the whole line, told Colborne to charge them, saying they would not stand. In a few minutes more the last remnants of the French arrayed against Wellington were flying in confusion. Bulow about the same time finally succeeded in seizing Planchenoit, whence his guns swept the high road that was the sole line of retreat for the French. Under the merciless pressure of the Prussian cavalry, which had not yet fought, the whole French army melted into a mob of fugitives. History hardly records so complete a dissolution of an organised army.¹ What the French loss was has never been ascertained. Nearly 15,000 killed and wounded in Wellington's army, and 7000 in Blucher's, the great majority of them taken from Bulow's corps, are sufficient evidence of the severity of the conflict.

Napoleon had played his last stake, and lost it: there is no use in following his steps as a ruined fugitive. It is however worth while to sum up the chances of the eventful day of Waterloo. Early in the morning Napoleon's prospects were excellent: Wellington's army was slightly inferior to

¹ Readers who are curious in mendacity should read in Napoleon's Correspondence the bulletin dated Lâon, June 20, 1815, in which the battles of Ligny and Waterloo are reported.

his own in numbers, and the Belgian portion of it was not trustworthy. In consequence of the rain no Prussians could be on the field at all early. Doubtless the state of the ground would also have delayed movements of attack on Wellington's line : but if the battle had begun even at eight A.M. it is scarcely possible that Wellington could have held on till four, when first the Prussians began to be formidable. The delay in beginning threw away this advantage. Secondly Napoleon, as we have seen, miscalculated utterly about the Prussians : it was he who detached Grouchy with a force needlessly large for its supposed purpose, and failed to see in time the necessity of drawing Grouchy to his side. Thirdly the allied generals carried out tactically the purpose of co-operation with which they had begun the campaign, thus ultimately bringing almost double numbers to bear. It was Wellington's part to hold his ground, it was Blucher's to come to his assistance. How nobly the old Prussian redeemed his promise has been shown. Of Wellington it is told that he was asked to give instructions for the chance of his falling, a contingency the probability of which may be estimated from the fact that only one of his staff escaped untouched. "I have none to give," he said, "my plan is simply to hold my ground here to the last man." Lastly it is manifest that all might have failed but for the astonishing staunchness of the English and German infantry in Wellington's army. Nothing, in war or in peace, is so trying to the nerves as passively to await deadly peril, making no effort to avert it. And never probably in war was greater strain of this nature put upon troops than fell on Alten's and Picton's divisions at Waterloo. The guards and Hanoverians who held Hougomont had more prolonged and exciting conflict ; the heavy cavalry did magnificent service : to Maitland's brigade, and still more to the 52nd, belongs the conspicuous glory of having given the last crushing blow. But after all the chief honour belongs to the English brigades of Halkett, Kempt and Pack, and to the Germans who stood by their side.

CHAPTER XV

THE CRIMEA

NEARLY forty years elapsed after Waterloo before another European war broke out. Peace had been by no means undisturbed ; the revolutions of 1848 in particular occasioned serious fighting, but there had been no sustained war on a large scale. England had been entirely exempt ; and not a few persons in England had begun to dream that the age of peace had begun, while many more thought that England might and should stand aloof from all European entanglements, and follow the more profitable pursuits of peace. There is some reason to think that the latter class involuntarily helped to bring about war, that the Czar of Russia would never have adhered to the policy which led to the Crimean War, unless he had attached undue importance to their language, and believed that England would not fight.

The period of peace had witnessed great discoveries which were destined to revolutionise the art of war, as well as the conditions of peaceful life. Railways had been developed, fully in England, to a greater or less degree in the other nations of western and central Europe. Steam navigation had spread widely, though the majority of trading vessels, and an even larger proportion of men-of-war, still had sails only. The telegraph had been invented, but was not very extensively in use. All these new agencies played some part in the Crimean War, the telegraph somewhat to the detriment of the military operations, though their effect was trifling compared to the influence exerted in the war of 1870 by railways and the field telegraph. Except in one respect, there had been no changes in the art of war : and this one exception, the introduction of the rifle, was only beginning,

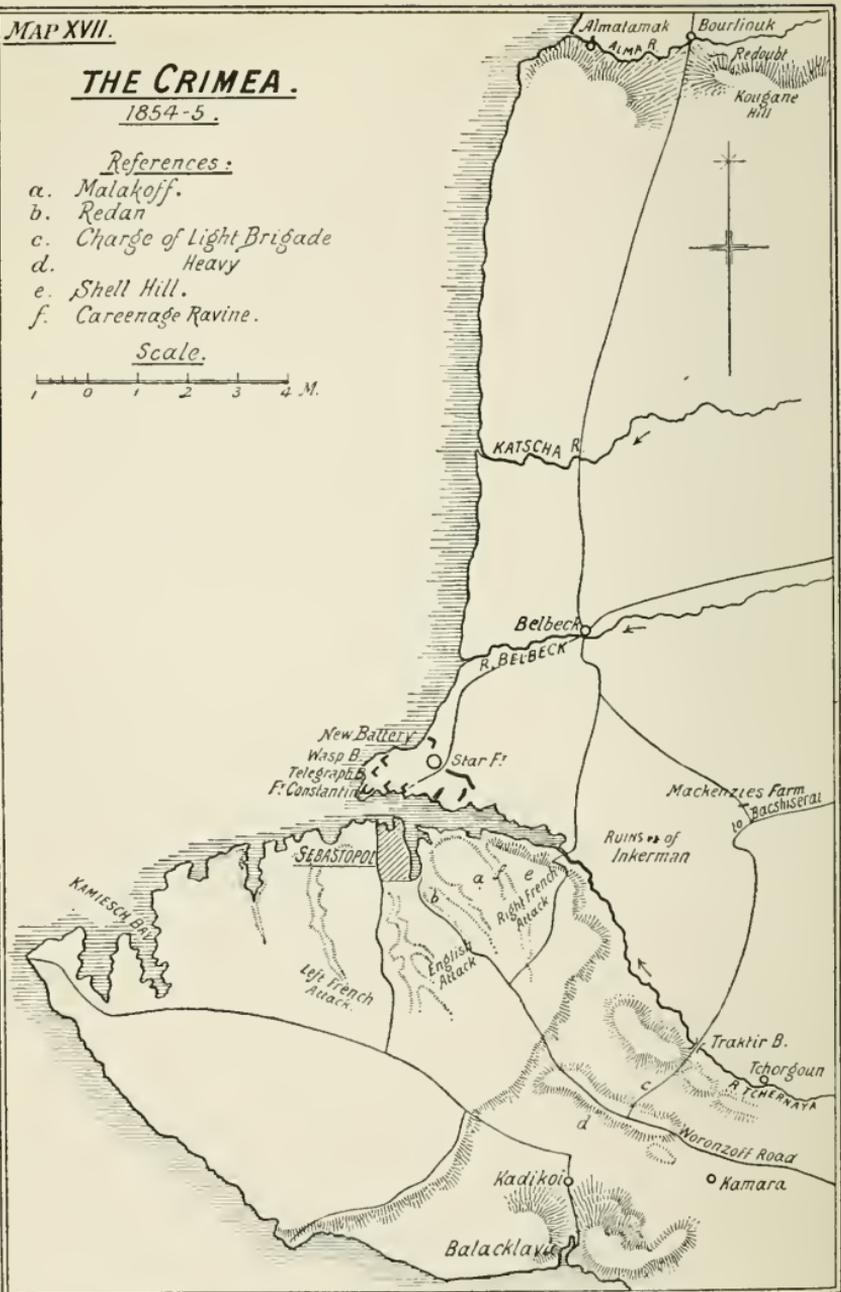
THE CRIMEA.

1854-5.

References:

- a. Malakoff.
- b. Redan
- c. Charge of Light Brigade
- d. Heavy
- e. Shell Hill.
- f. Careenage Ravine.

Scale.



though it involved potentially the vast extension in the range and rapidity of fire which has since revolutionised tactics. The fundamental principle of the rifle, grooving the gun-barrel so as to produce a rotation of the bullet, was known in the seventeenth century, if not sooner. The early forms of rifle far surpassed the musket in accuracy of aim, and also though in a less degree in range; but the difficulty of loading them was great, so that they were not suited to be the ordinary weapon of infantry, though picked men were armed with them. In 1836 a form of bullet was invented which would expand on the rifle being fired, and fill the grooves in the barrel. This conquered the difficulty of loading, and the rifle was gradually substituted for the musket; the English infantry sent to the Crimea in 1854 had nearly all received the new weapon, and the French also, but among the Russians the rifle was still only in the hands of a few picked men. The range was far less than what all soldiers are now accustomed to, but the advantage over the musket was very real. No corresponding advance had been made with artillery; hence the conditions of a siege remained the same as during the Peninsular War.

The Eastern question was not a new one in 1853: it is not likely to have disappeared from politics for many a year yet. In one sense it dates from the first conquest by the Turks of territory in Europe: the decline of a purely military power was inevitable whenever internal decay wasted the sources of its strength. Mohammedan conquerors could not possibly blend with their Christian subjects so as to form one people, as the Normans for instance did in England. Moreover, as soon as Russia became a powerful state, it was natural that she should seek for an outlet to the Mediterranean: and Russian ambition has been habitually unscrupulous. If Russia had succeeded in seating herself at Constantinople, after expelling the Turks from Europe, the change might or might not have been a gain to the Christian peoples of south-eastern Europe, but it would have meant an augmentation of Russian power extremely dangerous to the rest of Christendom. The other nations of Europe might have looked on unmoved while any other changes passed over the Balkan peninsula; they could not afford to let it fall into the hands of Russia. In face of Russian

aggression against Turkey, they had no practical option: they must support, for the present at least, the existing government of the Sultan, at the cost of prolonging the domination of a Mohammedan power, intolerant, polygamous, slave-holding, over Christian subjects whom its creed did not allow to be treated with common justice.

In the year 1853 the general conditions of Europe were such as to offer Russia an exceptional opportunity. Austria, the great power most deeply interested, was under a heavy debt of gratitude to the Czar, who had recently suppressed a Hungarian revolt which threatened the very existence of the Austrian empire; and she had moreover an unimportant quarrel with the Sultan. The king of Prussia, the power least interested, was the Czar's brother-in-law, and greatly under his influence. Napoleon III. had recently made himself master of France; and the Czar seems to have assumed that he was not firm enough on the throne to venture on war. He ought to have perceived that nothing would so strengthen the new emperor's hold on France as a successful war; moreover his uncle's fate and his own observations had made Napoleon III. anxious for alliance with England: if the latter determined on war with Russia, she was sure to have the co-operation of France. Thus everything really depended on the temper of England, and the Russian emperor persuaded himself that from this quarter he had nothing to fear. A little while before he had tried to bribe England to acquiescence in his designs, by suggesting that on the impending decease of the "sick man," as he called Turkey, he should be very willing to see England occupy Egypt, and thus secure her most obvious interest, control of the route to India. English diplomacy however had been, perhaps unfortunately, so reticent that the Czar believed England to be under the domination of the so-called Manchester school, and no longer capable of going to war to punish unprovoked disturbance of the general peace of the world.

A quarrel with Turkey was easily raised over the Turkish treatment of Christian pilgrims at Jerusalem, and the custody of the Holy Sepulchre there. The Russian demands amounted to a claim for a full protectorate over all Christian subjects of the Porte. For the Sultan to grant this would

have been equivalent to surrendering his independence : he refused, and Russia occupied the Danubian principalities, which have since become the kingdom of Roumania. In consequence of this high-handed proceeding, England and France, an attempt at mediation having failed, sent their fleets to the Bosphorus, and Turkey formally declared war on Russia. In reply to this, the Russian fleet destroyed a very inferior squadron of Turkish war-vessels in the harbour of Sinope. This roused public feeling in England, and the western powers joined in the war. Undecided fighting had been going on during the winter of 1853-4 along the lower Danube ; and in the spring Russia mustered her armies for decisive efforts. In May 1854 the Russian troops crossed the Danube and invested Silistria, which resisted steadily. England and France sent troops to the mouth of the Danube, which however were not wanted, for the Czar, yielding to Austrian menaces, evacuated the principalities. It might seem that nothing more need have been done : but so long as Russia retained a powerful fleet in the Black Sea, protected by the fortified harbour of Sebastopol, it was obvious that she could at any moment strike at Constantinople. The western powers accordingly resolved on an expedition to the Crimea, for the purpose of destroying this formidable stronghold.

There is no other instance in history of an army composing over 60,000 men being landed on a hostile coast, in face of a hostile fleet. No power but England has indeed ever successfully despatched a complete army¹ by sea, at any rate since the time of the Crusades ; and no other power could have achieved the invasion of the Crimea. It is true that the Russian fleet, knowing itself to be far inferior to the combined English and French squadrons, did in fact remain sheltered within the defences of Sebastopol : but it had to be reckoned with, and by the English alone. The French resources being insufficient to supply adequate transport, their men-of-war were laden with troops, and therefore in no condition to fight. Hence the English squadron had to escort the whole enormous fleet, which fortunately the Russians did not attempt to disturb. Again,

¹ Napoleon's Egyptian expedition is no real exception : it reached its destination, but the battle of the Nile rendered it a total failure.

the military value of steam navigation was plainly shown on this, the first occasion of its being employed, even partially. Every English transport was either a steamer, or was towed by one, though the French were less fully supplied. Consequently the expedition was conducted across the Euxine with speed, and landed exactly where its leaders chose, on the west shore of the Crimea, some thirty miles north of Sebastopol. Considerable delay had been caused by the collection of so vast a fleet of transports, greatly to the detriment of the health of the armies, which had suffered from the unwholesome climate of the lower Danube region in summer, and from an outbreak of cholera, chiefly among the French. Thus it was not until September 18, 1854, that the landing was completed. The English army numbered 26,000 infantry, with 60 guns and about 1000 cavalry: the French had 28,000 infantry and 68 guns, but had been unable to convey a single squadron of cavalry: there were also 7000 Turkish infantry. Considering the known strength of the Russians in cavalry, it seems that the allies ought to have been better supplied with that arm, even at the cost of leaving five times the number of infantry behind. The Russian want of enterprise however prevented the deficiency being seriously felt.

The allied governments had calculated correctly enough that the Crimea would not contain large armies; and that its great distance from the centre of the empire, with the badness of existing communications, would render it very difficult for Russia to carry on war there effectively. At the same time she could not allow Sebastopol to be destroyed without making every effort to save it—to do so would be to acknowledge defeat. The Russian commander, prince Menschikoff, besides leaving a garrison in the city, was able to meet the allies with an army very inferior in infantry (between half and two-thirds of their number) and fully equal in artillery, but with the advantage of possessing cavalry nearly four-fold the handful of the English light brigade. With this force he took post across the main road leading to Sebastopol, on the south bank of the little river Alma. The position was very strong by nature, and might easily have been made stronger by art. For fully two miles up the stream from its mouth cliffs rise on the south bank,

in many parts perpendicular, and allowing no access to the plateau extending thence almost to Sebastopol, save by a slight and difficult track close to the sea, and by a cleft three-quarters of a mile up, through which a rough road ran. Further up the cliffs cease, and the slopes become gradually more and more gentle, though broken into buttresses. The main road crosses the Alma more than three miles from its mouth, and ascends to the plateau between two of these buttresses. The allies having full command of the sea, and having men-of-war at hand, it is obvious that Menschikoff could not occupy the plateau above the cliffs; but he could with very little labour have destroyed the two steep and difficult routes, by which alone the plateau could be scaled. This however he neglected to do, and when the time came he was unable to oppose the French troops to whom it fell to ascend them. Nearly all the Russian artillery was posted on the landward side of the road, where advantageous ground was available for it to sweep the slopes in front. A considerable body of infantry was held in reserve, but the mass of it occupied the crest of the slopes landward from where the cliffs cease, for about two miles, the cavalry behind the right of the line.

The country being everywhere open and uncultivated, the allies were not tied to the road, but advanced on a very wide front, in columns which could quickly and easily be changed into line of battle. The French having no cavalry were on the right, nearest the sea: the English on the left, with the cavalry watching the front and flank. They had no definite knowledge of the enemy's proceedings or even strength, until on the morning of the second day, September 20, they came upon Menschikoff's position behind the Alma. The order of march necessarily implied that the French should scale the heights near the sea, while the English attacked that part of the position which being more accessible was strongly held. The task was a formidable one in face of the Russian batteries, some of them of heavier metal than ordinary field guns. The English general, Lord Raglan, waited for some time to allow the French to gain the plateau and so turn the Russian left: if he had only waited a while longer Menschikoff would probably have been dislodged without fighting, but Lord

Raglan yielded to a request from the French general, and ordered his line to advance. The light division was on the left, supported by the first division, consisting of the guards and a brigade of Highland regiments; the second division formed the right of the front line. Having given the word to attack, Lord Raglan with his staff rode forwards, and under cover of a burning village on the river-bank, reached a point of observation on the slopes beyond, whence he could see something of the battle but could issue no further orders: indeed the generals of division did not know what had become of him. Under these circumstances the attack cost the English some unnecessary loss. The first attack, up a slope raked by a powerful artillery, could hardly have been made with success in any formation but the familiar English line, though the space was too narrow to allow the troops room to deploy fully. Naturally the light division, which had to face the heaviest batteries, suffered severely; but they reached the crest, driving back the Russians, who were formed in solid columns of three or four times their strength, but who having only a narrow front were overpowered by the English fire. The Russians hardly fought with their usual stubbornness, the guns were withdrawn for fear lest they should be captured, and the victory would have been gained then and there if the battle had been properly managed; for the second division was going through much the same process on the English right, and the French were by this time making their way on to the plateau. Unfortunately there was no central control: the light division had to sustain unsupported a concentrated fire of infantry and artillery, which drove them at last down the slope, just before the guards came up behind them. The Russians soon gave way entirely, and the English artillery, boldly and skilfully used, inflicted severe losses on them in their retreat, which neither the cavalry nor the artillery made any attempt to cover. Close pursuit was not possible without a large body of cavalry; and the allies bivouacked on the plateau. The English loss in killed and wounded amounted to just 2000 men: the French loss of course was but slight: the Russians admitted a loss of nearly 6000.

Sir Edward Hamley condemns severely the generalship

of all parties. The Russian neither made the most of his position nor held it tenaciously, nor did he make any use at all of his very superior cavalry. The French had little to do, and did it somewhat slowly. The English fought admirably, and exemplified once more the vast superiority of line over column, if only troops are steady enough to be trusted in line : but their attacks were ill combined and therefore costly. All might have been saved, he argues, if the allies, ignoring the Russian left above the cliffs, had formed line of battle across their right. Menschikoff could not have made a counter attack on the right of the allies, for the descent from the cliffs under fire from the English ships would have been impossible. He must either have retreated at once, or have fought in a position where defeat would drive him into the sea. In fact the allies had much the same sort of opportunity which Marlborough used with such overwhelming effect at Ramillies. Neither of the generals however was a Marlborough; and there was the natural want of unity in operations conducted by two independent commanders acting together for the first time.

The harbour of Sebastopol is an inlet about four miles long, and from half to three-quarters of a mile wide. The city with its docks and arsenal is on the south side : and the ground rises steeply, broken by narrow ravines, to a high plateau which forms the south-western corner of the Crimea. On the south side of the peninsula, some eight miles south-east from Sebastopol, is the small but tolerably good harbour of Balaclava : and at the corner is the larger but less sheltered bay of Kamiesch. North of the great harbour of Sebastopol the ground rises high above the sea-level ; and the highest point was crowned by a large fort, while other fortifications on both sides of the entrance defended the harbour against attack from the sea. Menschikoff immediately after his defeat resolved on his course of action. Sinking some of the men-of-war in the mouth of the harbour, so as to make it impossible for the allied fleet to attempt an entrance, he left an adequate garrison in Sebastopol, and prepared to march out with the rest of his army into the open country. By this means he could keep open communication with Russia, and could use any chance

that might offer itself of interfering from outside with the siege operations.

The allies might perhaps have taken the north side of Sebastopol, with the aid of their fleet to engage the Russian ships, before the entrance to the harbour was blocked; but such a step would have brought them practically no nearer to the capture of the city and arsenal beyond the harbour, and would have given them no base of operations. From the nature of the case their base must be the sea, and therefore they were compelled to adopt the plan, in all respects the most expedient open to them, of marching past Sebastopol, seizing Balaclava which became the English port, and Kamiesch for the French, and beginning a regular siege of Sebastopol. The Russian communications from the city northwards were never interrupted, hardly interfered with. Thus the last great siege of what may be called the Vauban period of military history, presents the unique spectacle of a fortress never invested and yet reduced, of the resources of the defending power being poured into it till they were exhausted before the superior strength of the enemy.

Two days after the battle of the Alma, the allies moved southwards. Lord Raglan's resolution of "keeping his cavalry in a handbox," so long as they were so few, most praiseworthy on the battle-field, was inexpedient on the march; and the Russian general habitually neglected to use his cavalry. Hence Menschikoff's army quitting Sebastopol, and the allies moving on Balaclava, narrowly missed a collision which might have had very serious results. As it was, Menschikoff had advanced far enough to get out into the open country unhindered, and the allies occupied their intended position without a blow. The siege works were promptly begun, the English, roughly speaking, taking care of the east side of the city, and the French of the south. On October 17 a bombardment took place, which it was hoped might open the way to a decisive assault. The English fire inflicted enormous damage on the works, but the magazine in the principal French battery was exploded by a shell, and the Russians succeeded in silencing the other French guns, while the ships inflicted far less injury on the seaward forts than they sustained. No assault could be made, and the Russian engineer Todleben gave the first

evidence of his remarkable fertility of resource, in the speed with which he repaired the damage done by the English cannonade. The Russians naturally suffered greater loss in men, being more crowded than the besiegers, and obliged to hold troops in readiness to meet a possible assault. The well-stored arsenal of Sebastopol saved them from any fear of being crippled by expenditure of material. The bombardment was renewed more than once, with much the same results: it gradually became clear that Sebastopol would not be taken without a sustained siege.

Meanwhile the Russian field army had been gathering in the neighbourhood of Balaclava, and on October 25, the anniversary of Agincourt, made an attack on the allied position there, which led to the most famous feat of arms of the whole war. From the harbour of Balaclava the ground rises steeply on the west to the high plateau which was entirely occupied by the allies. On the east the ground rises equally steeply, and at the top a line of defence had been fortified, which formed an adequate protection for Balaclava itself. Northwards from the harbour a gorge opened up, past the hamlet of Kadikoi, into a plain, or rather two strips of plain divided by a low ridge, virtually surrounded on all sides by hills, which was the scene of the battle. Along the line of the dividing ridge, close to the road leading south-east from Sebastopol, a series of earthworks had been planned, as an outer line of defence, but they had only been partially made and were very slightly garrisoned. Lord Raglan had undertaken rather more than his fair share of the siege operations, and could spare very few men to hold Balaclava. In fact the garrison under Sir Colin Campbell only comprised his own regiment, the 93rd Highlanders, and three battalions of Turks. The English cavalry division had its camp in the plain above spoken of, and formed some additional protection, but they obviously could not man the works. Early in the morning some 25,000 Russians appeared over the hills bounding the Balaclava plain on the east, and attacked the nearest and largest of the small redoubts forming the outer line of defence, which was occupied by a few hundred Turks. No immediate support was possible: Campbell had not a man to spare: the cavalry, drawn up at the western end of the

plain, were with reason ordered to await the support of infantry, which had a long distance to march from before Sebastopol. The Turks fought obstinately, losing a third of their number before they were driven out: the Russians took two more of the line of works, and the Turks, utterly disheartened at receiving no support, fled in confusion down to Balaclava, carrying away the rest of their countrymen. Campbell had only the 93rd to resist an attack which might well have been made with twenty times his numbers. Kinglake tells how he rode down the line saying, "Remember there is no retreat from here, men; you must die where you stand!" and how the men shouted in reply, "Ay, ay, Sir Colin, we'll do that!" Fortunately the Russians did not realise their opportunity, and only made a desultory attack with a few squadrons of cavalry. Sir Colin did not deign to form square, according to the established tradition for infantry receiving a cavalry charge: he simply awaited their onset in line, two deep, and when the horsemen swerved to one side and threatened to get round his right flank, contented himself with wheeling one company to the right, to form a front in that direction. It was apparently nothing, but it marks the greatest advance made in warfare since the invention of gunpowder, the substitution of the rifle for the musket. The present generation is so used to the later developments of breechloaders, magazines, machine guns, which render cavalry useless against infantry unless by surprise, that it requires an effort to realise the fact that it is only forty years since Sir Colin Campbell's "thin red line" dared for the first time to await charging squadrons in that formation.

Meanwhile the main body of Russian cavalry had slowly advanced up the northern half of the plain, invisible to the English cavalry from the nature of the ground. An order had just arrived for eight squadrons of the heavy brigade to go forwards to Kadikoi and support Campbell. General Scarlett, who commanded the brigade, was executing this order, when a solid body of Russian cavalry, between two and three thousand strong, appeared over the ridge to his left. Scarlett at the moment was moving through his camp, where though the tents had been struck the ground was cumbered by the picketing cords. The Russians, as they

slowly descended the slope, threw out squadrons in line on each flank. Scarlett as soon as he had room charged with his leading squadrons, the Scots Greys and half of the Inniskillings, straight into the solid mass, which made no attempt to meet him with a counter-charge, though they had the slope of the ground with them. For a moment the handful of redcoats seemed to the spectators from the edge of the Sebastopol plateau to be lost among the overwhelming numbers of the grey clad enemy, but the second line came on in support, and the 4th dragoon guards, arriving last, took the Russians in flank. The unwieldy mass gave way, and was driven in confusion back across the ridge, and if only the English light brigade had charged them, might have been totally defeated. Unfortunately Lord Cardigan, who commanded the latter, considered himself bound by his orders to remain strictly on the defensive. Inexperienced in war, he had no idea that occasions may arise when a subordinate general should act on his own responsibility, and he let slip the opportunity.

Two English divisions were by this time approaching, but were not yet within supporting distance of the cavalry. Lord Raglan, who was watching everything from the edge of the plateau, saw that the Russians were preparing to carry off the guns from the field-works they had captured, and thought this portended a retreat of their whole force. Accordingly he sent to Lord Lucan, commanding the cavalry division, a written order to advance rapidly, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. It was a rash idea at best, the object to be attained being entirely incommensurate with the cost, and doubly unfortunate, considering the character of the men on whom it would devolve to execute it. Much heated controversy arose afterwards as to the responsibility of those concerned, which it is unnecessary to enter into.¹ The upshot was that Lord

¹ It was said that Captain Nolan, the aide-de-camp who bore the order, and who was well known from his writings to be a firm believer in the power of cavalry to perform the most impossible feats, answered Lord Lucan's objections by putting on the written words an interpretation which Lord Raglan did not intend, and that Lord Lucan was stung by implied imputation on his courage. Nolan however was shot dead at the first moment of the charge, and there was consequently no means of knowing what he could have said in his own defence.

Lucan ordered the light brigade to charge the Russian army, proposing to support them with the heavy brigade, which had already done one piece of very hard work.

Hardly the great breach at Badajos, hardly the *herse* of archers against which the French knights staggered through the mud at Agincourt, formed a more appalling death-trap than that into which Cardigan's six hundred rode. On the central ridge to their right were eight Russian guns, on the hills bounding the plain to the north were fourteen : infantry were on both ridges, with riflemen pushed down into the valley below. On each side squadrons of lancers were in readiness. In front, more than half a mile off, were twelve guns, before the main body of Russian cavalry, which had retreated so far after their defeat. Through a storm of shells and rifle-bullets the light brigade advanced, slowly at first, and quickening their pace as they went, and actually drove the gunners away from the Russian batteries at the end of the "vale of death." Lord Lucan advanced some way in support with the other brigade, but his men fell fast : and when the light brigade disappeared into the cloud of smoke that overhung the Russian guns in front, he halted and drew back, saying, unless he is misreported, "They have sacrificed the light brigade : they shall not the heavy if I can help it." What effect his further advance might have produced it is hard to say ; the audacity of the light brigade had for the time half paralysed the Russians, and there may have been just a chance of inflicting a heavy blow, the more so as at the same time a brilliant charge of some French cavalry along the line of high ground to the north drove the Russians away from that quarter. Probably however nothing could have been achieved to compensate for the ruin of all our cavalry : the moral effect on the enemy could not have been intensified. Presently the remnants of the light brigade were seen emerging from the smoke, and forcing their way back again, assisted by the clearance of the northern hills which the French had effected. Out of a total of 573 they had lost 247 men and 475 horses : one regiment, the 13th light dragoons, consisted of only ten mounted troopers at the first muster.

"C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre," is the famous comment attributed to the French general : and

no doubt the criticism was valid. At the same time the capacity to perform actions which transcend even the legitimate daring of war is a gift rarer, and within limits far more valuable, than the soundest military judgment. "The ruin of the light brigade," says Sir E. Hamley, "was primarily due to Lord Raglan's strange purpose of using our cavalry alone, and beyond support, for offence against Liprandi's strong force, strongly posted: and it was the misinterpretation of the too indistinct orders, sent with that very questionable intention, which produced the disaster. And yet we may well hesitate to wish that this step so obviously false had never been taken, for the desperate and unfaltering charge made that deep impression on the imagination of our people which found expression in Tennyson's verse, and has caused it to be long ago transfigured in a light where all of error or misfortune is lost, and nothing is left but what we are enduringly proud of."

The battle of Balaclava left the Russians in a position which commanded the above-mentioned road leading from Sebastopol past Balaclava to the south-east, and this cramped the communications of the English between their port and the siege works. The allies abandoned, if they had ever entertained, all thought of fighting a great battle in order to regain the ground thus lost; but Balaclava was soon covered with a strong and complete line of defence. Meanwhile the Russians had been pouring reinforcements into the Crimea, being well aware that when winter arrived it would be impossible to do so, and had formed a plan for attacking the northern extremity of the allied position, where it approached the upper end of the great harbour. Again the stress of the conflict fell on the English: in fact the topographical conditions were such that the English, taking Balaclava as their harbour, had necessarily to encounter all attacks from the outside, while the French, taking Kamiesch, were in contact with the city only.

The plateau surrounding Sebastopol is seamed with deep ravines running more or less northwards down to the sea, some of them three or four miles in length. By these ravines the various portions of the besieging lines were separated from each other, more completely in proportion as the works were brought nearer to the city. Thus some

little time must elapse before any one portion could be largely reinforced. The Russians hoped, by bringing a very strong force to bear upon the English troops occupying the bit of the plateau between the last of these ravines and the valley of the Tchernaya, to overwhelm them before they could be adequately supported, and so establish themselves on the plateau. If they could do this, the allies must fight a general action with their backs to the sea, that is to say with the certainty of destruction if they were defeated. From this necessity the allies were saved by the obstinate valour of the English infantry, who fought in what is known as the battle of Inkerman.¹

At the beginning of November Prince Menschikoff had at his disposal more than 100,000 men, exceeding the forces of the allies in the proportion of at least three to two. He thus had good reason for hoping to turn the tables on his enemies; and had his combinations been made with more skill, he might well have succeeded. His plan was that nearly 20,000 infantry with a quantity of artillery should issue from Sebastopol and assail Mount Inkerman, in conjunction with a somewhat smaller force from outside, which should cross the Tchernaya by the great bridge at its entrance into the harbour. At the same time the remainder of the field army under Gortschakoff was to demonstrate from the Tchernaya valley against the whole east side of the allied position; and the ample garrison of Sebastopol was to be in readiness to assault the siege works if they were denuded of troops. He forgot that every movement of Gortschakoff down in the valley could be fully seen from the plateau, and that therefore demonstrations were futile. A real attack in all quarters at once might, with his very superior numbers, have been made without risk: but he was not the man to depart from conventional methods. Similarly in planning the actual attack, he was swayed by the conventional, and usually sound, objection to sending troops into action divided by an obstacle which prevents all communication.

¹ On the other side of the Tchernaya are some conspicuous remains of ancient walls known as the ruins of Inkerman: from these the allies, who found it convenient to have names for all portions of the ground they were concerned with, named the opposite portion of the plateau Mount Inkerman.

Mount Inkerman was obviously to be assailed by ascending both from the Tchernaya on the east and from the great ravine on the west, known as the Careenage ravine. The forces detailed for this purpose would have amply sufficed to attack simultaneously the tongue of land west of the Careenage ravine also: but the Russian general was afraid to divide his troops by this very steep ravine, forgetting that Sebastopol with its large garrison lay behind, and committed the far worse error of crowding all his men into the one attack, where there was not room for half of them.

The tongue of land known as Mount Inkerman is by no means level. The English second division was camped just behind a ridge crossing it from east to west, which formed the position for the English artillery during the action. In front of this little ridge the ground sinks, ascending again to a hillock, known as Shell hill, three-quarters of a mile off, which was the Russian artillery position. Between them the tongue of land is narrowed considerably by a ravine on the east side, the incline of which is gentle enough to allow of the road from Sebastopol descending it to the Tchernaya. This road ascends to Mount Inkerman from the Careenage ravine, which may for practical purposes be deemed to terminate there, about three-quarters of a mile behind the camp of the second division. About this point was the camp of the guards' brigade: opposite it, on the other side of the Careenage ravine was the camp of the light division. Other English troops were from two to three miles off: and the nearest portion of Bosquet's French corps, which was now charged with the duty of guarding the east face of the plateau against possible attack from the Tchernaya, was scarcely nearer. Thus the first stress of the battle fell on the second division, about 3000 strong, commanded at the moment by General Pennefather, during the absence through illness of Sir De Lacy Evans.

Before dawn on November 5, General Soimonoff, issuing from Sebastopol, led 19,000 infantry and 38 guns up on to the northern end of Mount Inkerman, and there formed in order of battle. His heavier guns were posted on Shell hill, with two lines of infantry, about 10,000 in all, in front for attack, and the remainder in reserve behind Shell

hill. As the maximum width of the tongue of land does not exceed 1400 yards, it may be imagined that the infantry were in very dense formation, a fact which partly accounts for the enormous losses which they sustained in the course of the battle. About seven o'clock the Russians advanced, their guns opening fire over the heads of the infantry: Pennefather very wisely pushed his men forwards into the hollow to support his pickets, occupying the crest in front of his camp with artillery. The English infantry, formed as usual in a thin line, and with the advantage of superior weapons, drove back time after time their far more numerous assailants. Most part of the light division were naturally required to occupy their own tongue of land, but General Buller with two regiments from it was the first to reinforce Pennefather. One of these regiments rendered the important service of routing a separate Russian column which was coming up to the head of the Careenage ravine, and threatening to take the second division in rear. Gradually other English troops arrived on the scene, but the conflict long remained very unequal in point of numbers. The day was not clear, though dense fog clung only to the bottoms: hence the Russians, unable to see how little there was behind the thin red lines which met them so firmly, imagined that they were encountering masses at least equal to their own. The inequalities of the ground rendered it practically impossible to retain regular formation, and this told against the Russians, both as being much more crowded together, and also as lacking the power of independent action which the habit of fighting in line gives. It was reported at the time that the troops in Sebastopol had been prepared for battle not only by appeals to their religious enthusiasm, but also by copious rations of vodki, or, as the current jest ran, were under the influence of stimulants both spiritual and spirituous. If there was any truth in this, it would help to account for the comparative ease with which the first Russian attacks were routed: when the troops of General Pauloff, brought across the Tchernaya and up the eastern slopes, came into action, the fighting was much more obstinate.

As the English grew stronger on the field, General Cathcart with the fourth division made a needless attempt

to push forward along the slope overhanging the Tchernaya, in which he was killed, and his men suffered heavily. From the nature of the case, there was nothing to be done except to hold the ground, and let the Russians exhaust themselves, as they gradually did. During the latter part of the battle French troops came up. General Bosquet had naturally been distracted between his primary duty of watching the Russians below him in the Tchernaya valley, and the duty of reinforcing his allies. Soon after the action began he sent a couple of regiments towards Mount Inkerman, but an English general, totally misinformed as to the strength of the Russian attack, stopped them as not being needed. Later Bosquet learned the true state of the case, and also saw that the movements in the Tchernaya valley meant nothing, and he therefore despatched heavy and welcome reinforcements to Mount Inkerman, the foremost of which took an important share in the fighting. It is obvious that if the large Russian force available for the purpose had attacked Bosquet in earnest, he could not have spared a man to support the English, who would have been very hardly pressed. When the Russians finally abandoned the action despairing of success, though they had lost fully 12,000 men, they had still 9000 in reserve, besides their broken front lines, while the English had on the field less than 5000 unwounded men. But for the relief given by the French, who had been fighting beside them for the last hour or two, and had borne the weight of the action to an extent represented by a loss on their part of 900 men, the English would manifestly have been fewer still. They had lost over 2300 men, or about a third of those actually engaged; they were in no position to turn the tables on their opponents, even if prudence had not dictated, as the French undoubtedly thought, the choice so difficult in battle of leaving well alone.

Inkerman was not unappropriately christened "the soldiers' battle." Under the conditions of weather no general could have efficiently directed any elaborate scheme, and fortunately none was needed. The shape of the ground and the relative numbers would have compelled resort to the simple tactics which in fact were adopted, even if the air had been perfectly clear. They were in accordance

with the habitual practice of the British soldier to form line, and in that formation sustain the attack of columns, and drive them back in rout when their front has been crushed by the wider fire of the line. Thus regimental officers without superior command, even the men uncommanded when their officers were struck down, were ready to sustain the fight in the best way. "No other European troops," says Sir Edward Hamley, "would at that time have formed in a front of such extent without very substantial forces behind them." With an enormous weight of artillery against them until near the close of the action, with odds of infantry against them which began at three to one, and which must have been heavier still for a while when General Pauloff came on the field, they held their ground with an audacious obstinacy which it would be difficult to parallel in European warfare.

The victory of Inkerman marked a decisive point in the campaign. Foiled in this carefully prepared enterprise, the Russians henceforth made no attempt to challenge battle in the open field. They limited themselves to withstanding as far as possible the advance of the siege operations, which were carried on under considerable difficulties, arising both from the nature of the ground and from the skill displayed by Todleben in making the utmost use of every opportunity. The approach of winter was however destined to enforce, not a cessation of hostilities, but the prosecution of them in a slow and uneventful fashion. Reinforcements could no longer reach the Crimea, except at a cost prohibitory even to the vast resources in men of the Russian empire. And though the allies, having their communications by sea, were not liable to the same exhaustion, yet a disaster befel them soon after Inkerman which reduced them for the time practically to the defensive. On November 14 a furious storm burst on the allied camps, followed by much rain and snow. The tents were blown down, and the whole country converted into a wilderness of mud. At the same time many vessels laden with stores were wrecked. For many weeks after this disaster, the sufferings of the English army were intense. The fundamental cause was want of forage: without it the horses died, and supplies could only be conveyed from Balaclava to the camp by the

soldiers, already as hard worked in the trenches as they could bear. Food was never actually wanting, but hardly any fuel was to be procured; the soldiers were never dry, and often ate their food raw. Naturally under such conditions they sickened and died in thousands. The French, having shorter distance between their harbour and camp, and a tolerable transport service already organised, in which the English were deficient, and having also a smaller part of the siege works to maintain, suffered materially less. Things improved slowly, but the siege was protracted indefinitely; in fact it became a contest of endurance between the rival powers, in which the command of the sea ensured ultimate victory to the allies.

Early in the new year the French, whose army had now been largely reinforced, took in hand an additional portion of the siege works, thus making for the first time a fairly equal partition of labour with the English.¹ Instead however of taking over the left portion of the English works, which adjoined his own, the French general preferred to undertake the new operations which had long been intended against the east face of the city. Here however the ever active Todleben seized and fortified, just in the nick of time, a knoll some way in advance of the Malakoff redoubt, the main defence of this side of Sebastopol. This new fortification, known as the Mamelon, was so situated as to prevent the English trenches at the south corner of the city being pushed forwards. Consequently the main work of the siege concentrated itself on the new French attack.

Political reasons operated to cause delay, which may be fairly said to be one of the results of divided control. The death of the Czar Nicholas made no difference, for his successor could not but continue the defence. But the opinion of Napoleon III., that the capture of Sebastopol was only feasible if it was completely invested,

¹ It is not suggested that the French general at the outset, or later, evaded his due share of the common duty: it is one of the evils of a divided command that if a mistake is made in such a matter, as may easily happen from imperfect information, obstacles to remedying it arise from motives on both sides which are in themselves perfectly reasonable.

which meant the detaching of a force to cope with the Russian field army, was persistently pressed. The English government, like the generals on the spot, thought differently; but the emperor must be held responsible for at least part of the waste of time. Conflicts, equivalent in the losses sustained to many pitched battles, occurred again and again. A bombardment of ten days in April, which would have been followed by an assault if the whole siege had been directed by a single enterprising general, cost the Russians over 6000 men. The artillery employed on both sides far exceeded, both in number of guns and in weight of metal, anything that had ever before been seen in a siege. The material progress during forty years of peace was visible in many ways. Steamers brought the contents of the English and French arsenals: the English made a railway from Balaclava up to the camps: a telegraph cable put the Crimea into communication with the western countries, which greatly accelerated the supply of whatever was wanted, though it enabled Napoleon III. to worry the army incessantly with his military ideas. Marshal Pelissier, however, who took Canrobert's place in the spring, was equal to his position, and in concert with Lord Raglan carried on the siege upon the principles already determined. On June 7, after another terrific bombardment, the French stormed the Mamelon, though not without a serious struggle. On the 18th another attack was made which ended in failure. The day had been chosen in the hope that a victory won by English and French in common might supersede the bitterness of Waterloo: but whatever chance of success existed beforehand was wasted by Pelissier's suddenly determining to assault without waiting for a preliminary cannonade. The result was that the French were repulsed from the Malakoff with heavy loss, the English from the Redan, the chief Russian work at the south-eastern corner of the city, with at least equal loss relatively to the numbers engaged, the only success being the capture of a small work in front of the English left.

In spite of this failure, in spite of the death of Lord Raglan which occurred a few days later, the siege went steadily on. The resources of Russia were gradually becoming exhausted. Returns compiled about the date of

the Czar's death gave the total cost of the war to Russia at 240,000 men: since that date more than 80,000 had fallen in the Crimea. An ill-conceived attempt to raise the siege by attacking the eastern side of the allies' position from the Tchernaya valley failed disastrously in August. Prince Gortschakoff, now commanding in the Crimea, felt that the end was approaching, and took measures to prepare for the evacuation of Sebastopol, but changed his mind and awaited the final assault. On September 8 the end came: the French trenches had now been brought quite close up to the Malakoff tower, and Pelissier, carefully noting the exact point and moment at which an assault could best be delivered, stormed the great work. A simultaneous attack by the English on the Redan was a necessary part of the plan: the soil in front being solid rock, the assailants had to advance for some distance over open ground, and suffered badly. The capture of the Malakoff was however decisive. During the following night the Russians abandoned Sebastopol, or rather its ruins: for they completed, in blowing up their magazines and forts, the destruction wrought by the bombardments. The siege of Sebastopol takes rank in history not as the most momentous—in that respect it falls far below the Athenian siege of Syracuse—or the most protracted, but as that in which the greatest resources were employed on both sides. Success fell, as might be expected, to the side which represented the greatest advance in material civilisation.

The war nominally lasted for several months longer: the allied armies occupied the Sebastopol peninsula during the winter, and small operations were directed against other points of Russian territory. Substantially however the fall of Sebastopol was decisive; the destruction of the great arsenal and fortress was a heavy blow to Russian power in the Black Sea, and the retention of it had been made so definitely a point of honour by Russia that its capture was a formal symbol of defeat. With the spring of 1856 terms of peace were agreed on, which included the prohibiting any ships of war to sail on the waters of the Black Sea. At one moment it seemed as if France would have acceded to terms which required from Russia practically no sacrifice; but Napoleon III. yielded to remonstrance from

England, coupled with the assurance that England was now able, and quite prepared, to carry on the war alone.

The history of England is full of evidence that there is almost no limit to the power which an industrial nation, having command of the sea, can bring gradually to bear upon a warlike enterprise, always assuming that she has the necessary resolution. And no more striking evidence is to be found than from comparing the state of the English army in the Crimea in December 1854 and in December 1855, especially if we bear in mind the expenditure in men and material during the year. Whether anything of the same kind could happen again, whether in another war time would be available for utilising resources which must in a sense be latent till war begins, whether other nations have gained on England in the race of material progress, whether England would again exhibit the national tenacity displayed in the Peninsula and in the Crimea, are questions which every lover of peace will desire to see remaining, as they are at present, matters of speculation.

INTERMEDIATE NOTE

INFERIOR RACES

It is more than probable that Wellington's Indian experience stood him in good stead when in the Peninsula he had to face the task of converting the untrained Portuguese into good troops. Discipline is essentially the same, whatever the race or character of the men to be subjected to it. They have to learn prompt obedience to orders, the habit of relying implicitly on their officers for military guidance, familiarity with the idea that duty must be done first and personal safety left to take care of itself, coolness and presence of mind in encountering danger, even unexpectedly. All this the Portuguese had to learn, but in other respects they were like enough to his English troops, already disciplined to his hand. They were Europeans and Christians, that is to say they recognised more or less the same moral code : they were patriotic, striving with foreign assistance

to deliver their homes from the foreign conqueror. They had motives for responding to the call made on them which are intelligible, and cogent, to any European. The native troops that Wellington had learned to employ in India were like them in one important point, their being called on to trust and follow a foreign leader ; they were like them also, as the event proved, in capacity to profit by training ; but in ideas and habits they were totally different.

The British conquest of India is one of the most astonishing, as well as important, things in modern history : and the wonder of it consists mainly in the fact that the English from the first were successful not only in getting their subjects to fight for them, but in transforming them, for military purposes, almost into Englishmen. Men of the most varied types were from time to time brought under the spell. Hindoos with a peculiar and very ancient civilisation of their own, the higher castes regarding themselves as socially and morally the salt of the earth, the lower castes accustomed to permanent and almost degrading inferiority ; Mahommedans who had once been conquerors and deemed themselves the born superiors of their former slaves ; fierce hill-men very low down in the scale of civilisation ; strangest of all, the Sikhs with their national and religious enthusiasm still young,—all alike became the zealous soldiers of their rulers from over the sea. Nor was this all : the sepoy imbibed the military qualities of the men who fought beside them, including the superb tenacity which makes the British soldier always hard to beat.

The English battles in India were nearly all fought against odds, occasionally enormous ; and in every case, except in some of the battles during the Mutiny, the bulk of the army consisted of native troops. What is the explanation of this phenomenon, unique in history ? One main cause clearly was, to quote Colonel Malleson's ¹ words : "the trusting and faithful nature, the impressionable character, the passionate appreciation of great qualities, which formed alike the strength and the weakness of those races ;" but this description hardly applies to all the multifarious races of India, though doubtless it does to many, and pre-eminently to the people of Bengal, where practically the British dominion was founded. Half of the explanation must be looked for on the other side. Unless the natives of India had been capable of receiving the impression, obviously none could have been made : but the Englishmen who laid the foundation of our Indian empire possessed the requisite qualities for creating it. They made their followers understand that when an Englishman said a thing he meant it, and this in two senses.

¹ *Decisive Battles of India.*

If he made a statement he believed it to be true ; also, and more important, if he gave a promise or declared a purpose, he would fulfil it. Further they taught the natives to understand that when a thing was undertaken, it must be done ; difficulties must be vanquished, odds, no matter how great, must be encountered, if such things came into the day's work. The coolness with which they assumed the certainty of success naturally went a great way towards achieving it, and was all-powerful in convincing the natives, ignorant, but by no means stupid, that the English possessed an inexhaustible reserve of strength and resource. Then the English treated their native soldiers well, looked after them more steadily and intelligently than any Indian princes would have cared or known how to do, and taught them to feel that they were invincible. The very strangeness of the Englishman's motives and principles of action made them all the more impressive to men who saw that they were successful. And the fact that the sepoys were assumed by their officers to be capable of great things went far to make them so. Never give in, never mind odds ; these were the maxims on which the men of whom Clive is but the most conspicuous, habitually acted ; and the results were that these became the accepted rules of conduct for Englishmen in India, and that the native soldiers of whatever race learned to rely implicitly on their officers.

Scores, hundreds of times in the last century and a half, in matters great and small, English officers have acted on these principles as a matter of course ; and equally as a matter of course their native soldiers have done under English leadership what they never would have dreamed of doing if left to themselves. Courage, most of the races which furnished sepoys possessed in abundance ; and that courage they placed at the disposal of the foreigners in whom they recognised fertility of resource, power of combination, so far above their own level, that they seemed to belong to a superior order of beings. Nor can there be any doubt that the fact of their being so regarded helped to raise the English above their natural level.¹ They must live up to their position, both to the traditions of the service and to the idea entertained of them. When they cease to do this, the hold of England on India will be precarious. Whether they are tending to do so may be judged from the

¹ Englishmen in India made many mistakes at one time or another, but there was always some one at hand to redeem the blunder, or else they were saved by the reputation for audacity and invincibility due to previous successes. They were guilty of many wrongful acts, but the sufferers were the native princes whom they dispossessed : it is probably no exaggeration to say that the rule of the English at its worst was better than the best government of any native princes.

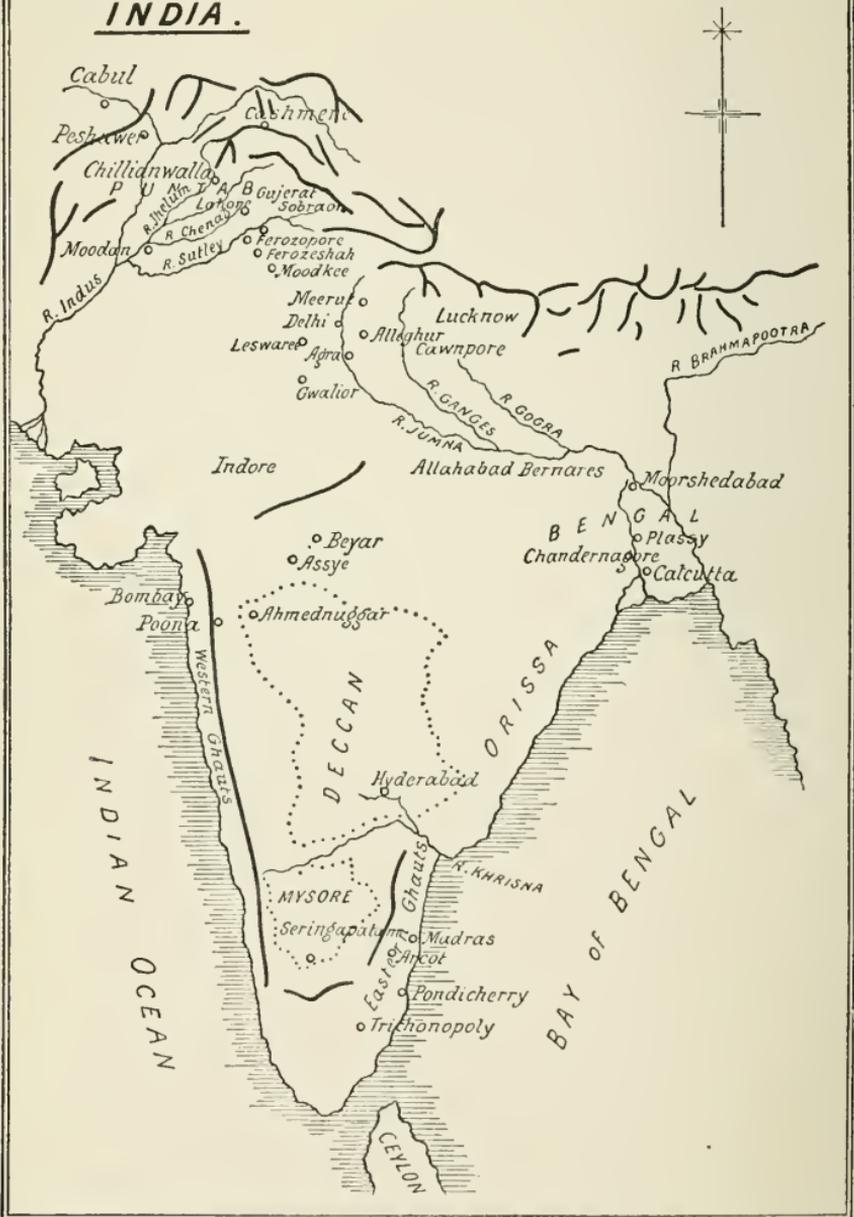
history of any and every little war, such for instance as the Kanjut expedition in 1891, the most notable feature of which was the storming of Thol, and which is fully and picturesquely described in Mr. E. F. Knight's book, *Where Three Empires Meet*. Even more characteristic of the needs, and the achievements, of British rule in India, is a narrative of an incident on a very small scale, done in the way of everyday business, which is given in a tolerably recent newspaper (the *Spectator* of April 23, 1892) from a letter of the chief actor.

"Lieutenant G. F. MacMunn, R.A., had been ordered to march with fourteen men, of whom, fortunately for him, twelve were Goorkhas, to convey some stores, principally rum, from Myitchina to Sadon, a small fortified post in Burmah, a distance of about fifty miles. The road was considered perfectly safe, and about twenty-five miles were passed in tranquillity, when the young lieutenant—he cannot be above twenty-two—received information which showed that some rebels of the Kachyen tribe intended to bar his path. This meant that he must either retreat, or force his way along a rough road, continually crossed by streams, and lined with jungle on each side, through a hostile force which might number hundreds, and did number sixty at least, armed with muskets, and sufficiently instructed in the military art to build stockades both of timber and stone. Lieutenant MacMunn, who had probably never heard a gun fired in anger in his life, seems not to have doubted for a moment about his duty. The people in Sadon, he thought, would want the rum, and he pushed on, to find the enemy holding a ford where the water was up to his shoulders. He plunged in with three Goorkhas, and forded the eighty yards of water, 'getting volleyed at awfully,' but was left unwounded, and 'rushed' one side of the stockade, and then, bringing over the rest of his men, rushed the remaining works. The Kachyens fled, but four miles in advance towards Sadon halted again, constructed another stockade, and filled the jungle on each side of the road with musketeers, who poured in, as the Goorkhas advanced, a deadly fire. The Jemadar was shot through the lungs, a Goorkha hit in the foot, and Lieutenant MacMunn wounded in the wrist; but he went down into the jungle with two men only, the remainder forming a rearguard, and carried the stockade, the Kachyens firing futile volleys, and the Englishman and his comrades, as he writes in school-boy slang, 'giving them beans.' Sadon was now visible, and encouraged by the sight, Lieutenant MacMunn pressed on; but the Kachyens were not tired of the fight, and had erected another stockade, this time of stone, across the road, with a ditch five feet deep by ten feet broad in front of it, a proof in itself of their considerable numbers and skill. The lieutenant asked 'the boys' if they would 'follow

straight,' and they being Goorkhas, half-mad with fighting, and understanding by this time quite clearly what manner of lad was leading them, 'yelled' that they would, and did. Into and out of the ditch, and up to the stockade, and again the Kachyens fled, only to turn once more, and—but we must let Lieutenant MacMunn tell the rest of his own story. 'It took us half-an-hour to repair the road and pull down the stockade; and on and on, wondering where our friends were.' (The garrison of Sadon knew nothing of the advancing party or its danger.) 'One mile on they again fired at us from the jungle; but the road was clear, and we hurried on down the hill, where we had to cross a river bridged by our sappers. On the way down they banged away at us, and near the river they had stuck in any amount of pointed spikes in the road, and while we pulled these up they fired again and again, and we volleyed in return. We then hurried down to the bridge; to our dismay it was destroyed, so we had to cross the river by wading lower down, and very deep it was. It was quite dark, and took us quite half-an-hour to get every one across, and then the road was blocked with spikes and trees, and the Kachins fired continually. At last we got to Sadon village, half-a-mile below the fort which our fellows had made. In the village from every house and corner they fired. My horse was shot in the hind-leg, the bullet going through the muscle, and a driver was hit too. The Goorkha ponies broke loose and galloped about, the mules went in every direction, and the Goorkhas cursed and blazed away, and still no sign from our friends, and I began to fear the fort had been taken. I put the wounded driver on a pony, and we hurried on, collecting what ponies and mules we could. In ten minutes more we saw the fort in the darkness ahead, and I started off a ringing cheer, followed by my men; bugles rang out, and they cheered in reply, and in another minute we were inside. I was surrounded by men on all sides, patting me on the back, holding me up, giving me water, asking questions.'"

OUTLINE MAP of
INDIA.

MAP XVIII



CHAPTER XVI

INDIA

PART I.—CONQUEST

THE history of the foundation of the English empire in India is full of paradoxes. The East India Company had no purpose beyond trade: they had been allowed to form settlements at various places, and like other landowners had a few armed men to protect them against possible violence; but they did not dream even of asserting their independence of the native princes. It was the French, not the English, who won the first victory against great odds over a native army, and so disclosed the *arcanum imperii*, the secret that European discipline would prevail against almost any numbers, and that native soldiers, trained in the European method and fighting alongside of European comrades, could be made almost equally effective. The restless ambition of Dupleix, striving to establish French dominion in southern India, led him to attack the English of Madras, as hereditary enemies at home as well as possible rivals in India. The English were driven to war in self-defence, and they found in Clive a leader who was nearly Dupleix's equal as a statesman, and was also, what Dupleix was not, a born general. Down to 1751 it had been supposed in India that the English could not fight: they had certainly shown no inclination for war. Clive's defence at Arcot, followed by his victory in the field over a very superior force commanded by a Frenchman, transferred to his countrymen that moral and military preponderance which Dupleix had gained for the French. No better illustration can be found of the

principle that the boldest course is generally the safest, than Clive's victory at Cauveripak.¹

The first step was thus gained involuntarily, as a consequence of French aggression: the second and more important step was the result of an unprovoked attack on Calcutta. In 1756 a spoilt boy became Nawab of Bengal, and at once proceeded to make war on the English settlements, which had virtually no means of resistance. On his capture of Calcutta, followed by the well-known catastrophe of the Black Hole, the Madras government sent all the force that could possibly be spared, under the command of Clive, to attempt to regain what had been lost. Clive's landing was followed by the easy recovery of Calcutta and by other successes, which terrified the Nawab into restoring all that the English had ever held in Bengal. Clive however had not forgotten Duplex. The Seven Years' War had just broken out; it was more than probable that the French, whose influence was still paramount in the Deccan, would ally themselves with the Nawab, and so enable him to re-conquer Calcutta. Clive in fact was beginning to discern dimly, what we after the event can see plainly enough, the end to which affairs in India were tending. Given the political conditions, the Mogul empire utterly weak, and its nominal subordinates fiercely hostile to each other; given also the enormous preponderance conferred by European discipline; the time was approaching when some European nation would become supremely influential, the chief power in India, if not actually dominant. Moreover the only possible candidates for supremacy in India were France and England: and in view of the rivalry between them in America as well as in Europe, no postponement of the inevitable struggle in India was to be looked for. Neither side saw clearly the greatness of the stake for which they were contending, but each felt instinctively that there could be no security while the rival power retained a real hold on any part of India. The game was won for England on the field of Plassy by the political and military genius of Robert Clive.

The miserable Surajah Dowlah was no match for Clive in

¹ Colonel Malleon, in his *Decisive Battles of India*, gives a very clear account of this remarkable feat, as well as of other similar battles, which must be here passed over.

the cabinet, any more than in the field. Afraid of his neighbours, especially of the Mahrattas, he was distracted between desire to conciliate English support and dread of English power. The French settlement of Chandernagore was, like Calcutta, under the nominal suzerainty of the Nawab, and therefore though France and England were at war, Clive had no right to attack it without the Nawab's permission. The refusal was a grievance of which Clive made the most ; he seized Chandernagore, and defied the native army that was marching to protect it. Surajah Dowlah had dreamed, in one of his vacillations towards a leaning on English support, of crushing with their aid the great nobles whose power was a danger to him. Hence some of them were ready to side with the English against him, and Clive ultimately made a regular treaty with one of them, Meer Jaffier, who was to be made Nawab, on payment of a large sum, as soon as Surajah Dowlah had with his assistance been overthrown. When Clive however found himself within reach of the Nawab's army, Meer Jaffier was still on openly friendly terms with his master, and in command of a division of the army. Clive had only general assurances that Meer Jaffier meant to keep his engagement with the English, which might or might not be sincere.

The circumstances of the case put any middle course really out of the question. Though various expedients were suggested, he must choose between retreat and attacking with 3000 men, of whom less than one-third were English, the Nawab's army of 50,000 men, on the chance of Meer Jaffier coming over to his side. While the choice was yet open, while a river still separated the two armies, Clive called his officers together. Councils of war proverbially do not fight, and this was no exception. The majority, with whom Clive himself voted, advised against immediate action. The minority, led by Eyre Coote, who afterwards won the victory of Porto Novo that broke Hyder Ali's power, declared for advancing. When the council was over, Clive, with whom as commander the final decision necessarily rested, went apart under a clump of trees, and there took the resolution on which the fate of India hung. Next morning his little army crossed the river, and by nightfall was face to face with the enemy ; they bivouacked in a

mango grove north of the village of Plassy, with the river close to them on the west, and the intrenchments which covered the Nawab's camp about a mile off to the north.

Early next morning (June 23, 1757) the Nawab's army moved out and took order for battle. On the right, half-a-mile north of the grove which sheltered Clive, and close to the river, were posted some guns manned by Frenchmen, behind which were massed the flower of the Nawab's troops, commanded by his one thoroughly trustworthy general Meer Mudin. The rest of the army extended thence in a long curve, formed with horse, foot, and artillery closely massed together, so far that its extremity almost surrounded Clive. The left portion, that nearest to the English, was commanded by the traitor Meer Jaffier, who still hesitated to take any decisive step. Clive formed his little army in order of battle, north of the grove, his one English regiment, the 39th,¹ in the centre, with his few small guns and his sepoy on each side. Cavalry he had none, while the enemy had some 15,000, besides twelve times his number of infantry, and five times his number of guns, mostly of heavier calibre. The enemy opened a cannonade, but did not attempt to come to close quarters: they had no need to do so, for their converging artillery fire would have sufficed to destroy the force exposed to it. Clive was in a trap, he could not advance on the French guns without ruinous loss, and exposing himself to being surrounded. Retreat was out of the question: all he could do was to take shelter in the mango grove, which was surrounded by banks, and await events, resolving at any rate to attack the Nawab at night. Then occurred an incident resembling that which preceded the battle of Crecy. A heavy storm wetted the powder of the Nawab's artillery, and reduced its fire to insignificance. Meer Mudin, thinking that the English guns were in equally evil case, boldly advanced with his cavalry to assail the position. But Clive's guns, which had been covered from the rain, received him with a discharge of grape, which drove the cavalry back in rout. Meer Mudin himself was killed, and with him died the Nawab's chance of victory. Timid and incapable, sur-

¹ In memory of this great victory the 39th bears on its colours the motto "Primus in Indis."

rounded by men who were either traitors or cowards, the Nawab gave the order to withdraw within the intrenchments, and soon fled from the field. Meer Jaffier so far disobeyed orders, as not to withdraw within the lines; but to the last he never mustered up courage to make his treason complete and side openly with the English. Clive now saw that his opportunity was come; advancing boldly, he drove back the artillery which was manned by Frenchmen, in spite of their determined resistance. The enemy's army was still intact, but they were practically without leaders, the Nawab having fled, and some at least of the chief officers being desirous to see Clive successful. In a disorderly fashion they issued once more from their intrenched position, but Clive gave them no rest: pushing on from point to point he drove them from their camp, winning one of the most decisive and far-reaching victories recorded in history, at a cost of less than a hundred killed and wounded.

The battle of Plassy virtually gave the East India Company Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. Many other wars had to be waged, many battles won by skill and daring which equalled, if they did not surpass, Clive's exploits, before the English rule was so firmly established that it could give peace and security to its subjects. But those victories were facilitated by the profound impression produced on the native mind by Plassy. It was no unmeaning instinct which interpreted the famous prophecy about the Company's *raj* lasting a hundred years only, to mean that it would be overthrown when a century had elapsed since the battle of Plassy.

Twenty years later Hyder Ali, a Mahommedan adventurer who had usurped the throne of Mysore, made an attempt to oust the English from southern India. It was not until after a long and doubtful struggle that he was overcome: indeed he himself died before the conflict was over, and the comparative incompetence of his son contributed greatly to the triumph of the English. Decade by decade it became clearer that whether the East India Company liked it or not, English power must extend itself further and further, under penalty of perishing altogether. The original strictly commercial basis of the Company had not been forgotten, but new policy had been forced upon it, partly by the necessity

of its position, partly by the intervention of Parliament. English officials in India no longer possessed the old opportunities for enriching themselves, which some of them had used with shameless rapacity, some with admirable disinterestedness. Good government, peace, security, were at any rate the avowed objects of the Indian administration, which had been more or less centralised ever since 1773 by the appointment of a governor-general. When in the first years of the nineteenth century one more native power attempted to expel the English, the supreme authority for this final conflict was in the hands of perhaps the ablest and most far-sighted statesman, whose name figures on the distinguished list of governors-general of India.

Colonel Meadows Taylor's remarkable tale *Tara* is probably less widely known than it deserves. Those who have read it, know what a fascinating picture it presents of the condition of life in India, at the epoch when the Mahratta power was founded. In the decline of the Mogul empire, during the latter part of the seventeenth century, a new Hindoo power was gradually built up, the original seat of which was in the difficult mountain country of the western Ghauts. Sivaji the founder appealed alike to the religious zeal and to the race feeling of the Hindoos, as against their alien Mahommedan rulers, without nominally repudiating allegiance to the emperor; the Mahratta power grew and spread, till it became supreme all over central India. Even in Bengal the raids of the Mahratta horsemen were a real danger: the first fortification of Calcutta, some years before Plassy, bears the name of the Mahratta Ditch. Late in the eighteenth century the Mahratta confederacy had fallen into somewhat the same condition politically as the Mogul empire. Their titular head, the Peishwa, was no more really supreme over the other Mahratta princes than the emperor at Delhi had been over the rulers of the Deccan and Bengal. About the time at which Mysore was finally passing into English hands, the ablest of the secondary Mahratta princes had gone near to making himself master of all India, outside the British sphere. He dominated the puppet emperor at Delhi; he had troops trained and officered by Europeans, besides the splendid cavalry which had always been the main strength of the Mahrattas. He was rapidly acquiring

preponderant influence over the Peishwa and the other Mahratta states, and dreaming of using his power to expel foreigners from India, when his death broke up the whole fabric.

The new Sindia¹ did not inherit his father's abilities, but he pursued in a clumsy and hesitating way the same policy. The Peishwa broke loose from his influence, fomented a quarrel between him and Holkar, and then, frightened at the storm he had raised, appealed for protection to the English. Lord Wellesley seized the opportunity: by the treaty of Bassein the Peishwa put himself into leading-strings. Sindia tried in vain to revive his father's schemes for a complete union of the Mahratta states against the British power. The Peishwa was bound, Holkar jealous; only the rajah of Berar could be induced to join him in war. The two princes however commanded between them a very large army, comprising some 10,000 infantry trained and largely officered by Europeans, a large amount of excellent artillery, cavalry estimated at fully 40,000, and a mass of irregular infantry besides. Against this force Lord Wellesley could bring into the field, after providing for other needs, nearly 17,000 men, including the cavalry of his dependent allies the Peishwa and the rajah of Mysore. This army was commanded by his brother Arthur Wellesley, but in view of the many possibilities of the campaign, it was divided into two nearly equal parts, General Stevenson commanding the smaller. Poona, the Peishwa's capital, had to be guarded, the safety of provision trains ensured (for the Mahrattas had wasted the country), and the enemy prevented from entering the Deccan, it being known that they were trying to induce the Nizam to join them. Wellesley's capture of Ahmednugur rendered Poona safe, and he then moved towards Sindia, who on hearing the news instantly set out towards the Deccan. With his enormous mass of quick-moving cavalry, Sindia, having even a small start, could have reached Hyderabad if he had dared; but he lost heart on finding that Wellesley was marching after him, and turned north-eastwards, managing to avoid

¹ Sindia, Holkar, Bhonslay, are family appellations, but they serve to identify three of the chief Mahratta states better than the individual names of the successive rulers.

fighting until he had concentrated the whole of his army. Wellesley and Stevenson met and concerted a plan, by which they should follow different routes, a proceeding apparently rendered necessary by the narrowness of defiles to be traversed, and fall on the enemy simultaneously on August 24.

Early however on the 23rd Wellesley, when he had just completed an early morning march, was informed that the enemy was encamped within a few miles, but was preparing to move off. As this would frustrate the plan of attack concerted with Stevenson, Wellesley must either let them escape or attack at once with his own force only. He had but 4500 trained troops, including two English infantry regiments, the 74th and 78th, and the 19th light dragoons, the rest being sepoys: there were also nearly 5000 cavalry belonging to Mysore and to the Peishwa, but he had good reason to believe that the latter at least would desert him if trusted. On coming in sight of the enemy, Wellesley found them drawn up on the opposite side of the river Kaitna, the infantry massed on the left near the village of Assye, the cavalry on the right. He saw at once that in the confined space they occupied (the river, with a little tributary flowing into it, forms a sort of horse-shoe) the enemy could not possibly bring their enormous superiority in cavalry to bear. The point¹ where the Kaitna could be crossed, was on the enemy's left flank, within gun-shot of Assye, so that the troops were obliged to ford the river and form their line of battle under fire. The Mahrattas meanwhile had had time to make something of a fresh formation facing the British line, the left still resting on Assye, and a second line, formed of troops for which there was no room between the rivers, at an angle to the first. A competent enemy would have used some of his enormous masses of cavalry to charge Wellesley's forces while fording the river, but Sindia was not very competent, and his ally proved himself a coward. Better men than either, both before and after Assye, were apparently paralysed by the coolness with which the English commanders did the most audacious things: it was as if

¹ It is said that Wellesley had no information that the Kaitna was fordable there, but that he inferred it from the fact of there being another village opposite Assye, and no sort of bridge.

they either could not believe their eyes, or took for granted that there must be some reserve out of sight to support such an advance. Wellesley's plan was to move his right slowly forward on Assye, while his left pushed on rapidly to force back the enemy's right; if this were done, the whole of the enemy's army would be jammed together upon the little tributary of the Kaitna, unable to fight effectively. The 74th however, on the right, were too eager and advanced too fast; the overwhelming artillery fire from Assye killed the cattle of the few guns that accompanied them, and caused slaughter enough to check the infantry. Sindia ordered forward his cavalry to charge the disordered line, but Wellesley was too quick for him; bringing up the 19th light dragoons and the Madras cavalry he ordered them to charge at full speed against the advancing Mahrattas. Nothing could resist the shock: the Mahratta horsemen were driven behind their infantry, and the 74th had time to rally. Meanwhile Wellesley had been pushing forward his left, and by the time the village of Assye was carried, his left had swept round, and the whole of the enemy's masses were driven at the point of the bayonet back upon the little tributary of the Kaitna, which however was fordable. As the infantry showed signs of re-forming beyond the stream, Wellesley followed them up with his cavalry, and effectually dispersed all but the troops trained in European fashion, which however retreated without attempting to renew the action. The Mahratta horse had still to be dealt with: they had been sharply checked once, but their numbers had suffered little. Wellesley's cavalry succeeded, though not without a severe struggle, in driving them off the field. The victory was for the time complete, though the loss was heavy in proportion to the numbers engaged, the English regiments in particular suffering greatly.

It required a month's more campaigning, the capture of two or three fortresses, and another battle at Argaum, to complete the subjugation of the region south of the Vindhya hills. Simultaneously General Lake had been engaged in a campaign far away to the northwards, overthrowing Sindia's power in the basin of the Ganges. Having stormed the extremely strong fortress of Aligurh, he had defeated near Delhi a Mahratta army consisting largely of trained troops

and commanded by a Frenchman, and had restored the blind Mogul emperor, who had long been a prisoner of Sindia, to his nominal throne. Two months after Assye, Lake destroyed on the hard-fought field of Laswaree the last army with which Sindia could keep the field. He and his ally practically submitted themselves to the English. Holkar tried his fortune later, with the same result.¹ If he had combined with Sindia in 1803 there might have been a better chance for the Mahrattas. The victory of Assye, which must on the whole be regarded as the decisive one of the Mahratta war, made the East India Company virtual masters of India. The Mogul emperor was their pensioner, the rulers of Oude, Mysore, the Deccan, their willing dependents. The Mahrattas gave more trouble before they fully submitted, and there was fighting in various other quarters at one time or another during the generation which followed Assye; but these wars were comparatively unimportant. Substantially it may be said that in the Mahratta war of 1803 the political genius of Lord Wellesley, aided by the military skill of his brother, completed the British conquest of India as far as the Sutlej.

¹ The parallel is singularly exact between the conduct of the three great Mahratta princes in 1803-4 and that of Austria, Russia and Prussia in 1805-6. The two former made war on Napoleon, trying in vain to induce Prussia to join them: after they had been decisively defeated at Austerlitz, Prussia alone attacked the conqueror, with the natural result of being still worse beaten at Jena.

CHAPTER XVII

INDIA

PART II.—SUPREMACY

THREE times, after the East India Company had become supreme in India, its dominion was exposed to serious danger of overthrow. The Afghan war, dictated by mistaken policy, and badly carried out, led to the greatest disaster in Anglo-Indian history, though it was redeemed by subsequent successes. The Sikh military power, built up by an able ruler, and disciplined by European officers, went very near to defeating British armies in pitched battles. The mutiny of the Bengal sepoy turned against England the main instrument of her previous conquests.

In the course of a long reign Runjeet Sing had become by far the most powerful Indian prince since Hyder Ali. The Khalsa, as the Sikh commonwealth was styled, was full of zeal for its creed, a reformed Hindooism. The race was hardy and vigorous, and Runjeet Sing, taking into his service many French and other adventurers, had given his army a discipline and cohesion never before approached by any oriental troops. He had conquered several provinces from the Afghans, though not uniformly successful against them, and by carefully respecting the prejudices of his people had won complete ascendancy at home. Though naturally he looked with no favour on the growth of the British power, he had the wisdom to discern its vast strength, and sedulously cultivated friendly relations with it, which the Calcutta government was very willing to maintain. One of the subsidiary purposes of the ill-advised Afghan war was to assist Runjeet Sing in increasing his dominions at the expense of

the Afghan monarchy. The real determining motive was however the same which led to the equally ill-judged Afghan war of 1878-9, dread of the advance of Russia in central Asia.

In 1837 Persia, largely under Russian influence, tried to wrest Herat from the Afghan monarch, Dost Mahommed, but the attempt failed, chiefly through the energy of Eldred Pottinger. The Afghans, fanatical Mahommedans, and bitterly hostile to foreigners, only asked to be let alone. Their country is very mountainous, and difficult of access, much of it barren, and the outlying parts occupied by lawless predatory tribes. With a little assistance from India, they would have afforded then, as later, a most effectual barrier against a Russian advance. Dost Mahommed would have welcomed an English alliance, chiefly to protect him against Persia. Lord Auckland however, the governor-general, persuaded himself that Dost Mahommed was not to be trusted, and determined to replace him by a pretender who had, as the event showed, no partisans in Afghanistan. Armies were sent to invade the country by more than one route, as from the nature of the case was inevitable, and occupied it without serious resistance. Then the difficulties began. Shah Sujah, the British puppet, had no capacity and could establish no power. Almost every imaginable blunder was committed by the English authorities at Cabul, both civil and military: the envoys were murdered, the army was to all intents and purposes placed in the hands of the revolted Afghans to destroy at their pleasure. The government of India was slow to perceive the absolute necessity of retrieving by vigorous measures our lost credit, and of avenging those who had been treacherously slaughtered. Lord Ellenborough, who succeeded Lord Auckland, was less incompetent to deal with the crisis, though his policy was by no means faultless. In 1842 Afghanistan was again occupied by armies, this time well and boldly led; and then the puppet was withdrawn, and Dost Mahommed resumed his throne. The net result of the whole war was to inspire in the Afghans a feeling of active dislike towards the English, which had hardly existed before, and to diminish the elements of order and civilisation, and therefore the chances of resisting Russia in case of need, in a state always barbarous and a prey to violence.

What might have happened if Runjeet Sing had lived to hear of the disaster at Cabul, whether his fidelity to the English alliance would have been proof against the temptation to strike for Sikh supremacy in India, it is not pleasant to conjecture. He however died when the first invasion of Afghanistan was progressing, and his death was followed by virtual anarchy in the Punjab. Rulers and ministers in rapid succession rose to power by violence or intrigue, and were deposed and murdered by similar means. Every revolution made the Sikh army more and more powerful in the state, more and more conscious of its own power. The soldiers were admirably brave, and capable of enduring enormous fatigue, nor had their discipline been impaired by their political preponderance, with its consequent high pay and license of violence. Man for man they were superior to any other natives of India, and little, if at all, inferior to English soldiers. Strong in religious zeal, they believed it to be their mission to expel the foreigners, and establish, throughout northern India at least, a purified Hindoo empire. The Sikhs were well provided with artillery, on which they placed their main reliance, and trained in all the methods of European warfare: though slow to attack, they defended intrenchments with extraordinary determination. Altogether they were an enemy such as the East India Company had never yet encountered. Fortunately for England, they had no really skilful generals, and they were, at any rate in the first war, led by men who were only anxious for their own personal advantage: from the soldiery they had practically bought their offices, and might be overthrown by them at any moment. At the best these chiefs calculated that a war with the English, if unsuccessful, would bring them under less exacting masters, if successful, might lead to indefinite possibilities. Their conduct, on more than one occasion, warrants the belief that they deliberately sought to destroy their own men.

Sir H. Hardinge, who succeeded Lord Ellenborough as governor-general, was an experienced and capable soldier: he saw that a Sikh war was probably inevitable, and brought troops up within easy distance of the frontier, while avoiding such a concentration as would provoke immediate attack. On December 11, 1845, the Sikhs crossed the river Sutlej,

the virtual frontier : Sir John Littler, who commanded the only British force in the immediate neighbourhood, boldly marched out of Ferozepore and offered battle, though they had five times his number. His confident attitude impressed the Sikhs ; their nominal commander-in-chief, who desired to commit them as deeply as possible, represented to them that it would be much more glorious to encounter and defeat the governor-general, and they followed the insidious advice. In a few days the English commander-in-chief, with a portion of the army that was concentrating, drew near. Misinformed as to his numbers, and urged on by leaders who desired their destruction, the Sikhs did not march with their whole force to meet him at Moodkee, but sent a detachment of barely his strength, all arms included, and very weak in the most important, infantry. Sir Hugh Gough showed on all occasions impatience of everything but direct attack in front. Forming his infantry in line he advanced, regardless of the Sikh artillery in their centre : his cavalry by a brilliant charge broke the superior Sikh horse which threatened his flank, and the Sikh infantry, greatly outnumbered, were inevitably forced back with the loss of most of their guns, though they never were routed. This experience of the quality of his enemies ought to have taught Sir Hugh Gough wisdom : had it done so, the unnecessary loss of several hundred men might not have been too dear a price to pay. Three days later (December 21, 1845) the available forces were concentrated, and moved to attack the Sikh army, which had entrenched itself to await him. Their position was, to use the words of Gough's own despatch, "a parallelogram of about a mile in length and half a mile in breadth, including within its area the strong village of Ferozeshah—the shorter sides looking towards the Sutlej and Moodkee, and the longer towards Ferozepore and the open country." The governor-general, who had joined the army, intimated his readiness to serve under Gough. Whether the battle would have been less rashly fought if he had commanded in chief, cannot be known ; certainly Gough, whose courage was magnificent, but who had no idea of using skill to save resort to sheer force, brought the army to the verge of overwhelming disaster.

The short December day was nearly over before the

troops were ready to begin the attack. The plan of the battle was of the simplest. Littler, on the left, was to assail the west face of the Sikh position ; Wallace on his right, the south-west corner and part of the south face, Gilbert on the right, the south-east. Between Gilbert and Wallace was massed nearly all the artillery, of which Gough in his impatience made very little use. Against Littler the Sikhs had, as it happened, their heaviest artillery, as well as overwhelming infantry ; and his attack was decisively repulsed. Wallace carried the intrenchments opposite him, but remained exposed to the fire of the enemy, who had only been driven back. Gilbert succeeded to about the same extent, but as darkness came on retired a few hundred yards, and there remained, ready to renew the action with daylight. The reserves were brought up just before dark ; the 3rd dragoons charged a battery and silenced it, and then swept through the Sikh camp, dealing destruction as they passed, but suffering heavily. Sir Harry Smith's division of infantry forced its way into the heart of the Sikh position, but being attacked in the dead of night was obliged to retire some distance. So qualified a success was practically a defeat ; Gough was no doubt fully determined to renew the struggle, but it is hard to see why further efforts should have been decisively successful, if the Sikhs had been properly commanded. They however had really no general : the nominal commander, Tej Sing, was watching Ferozepore with 10,000 men. The chief minister, who was with the main army, desired for his own sake the destruction of the soldiery whom he could not control. Hence when day dawned, the Sikhs had no coherence or definite purpose, and allowed themselves to be driven from Ferozeshah almost without resistance. Tej Sing and his division were by this time near enough to have restored the action, and perhaps to have won it, for the English ammunition was exhausted. But the traitor contented himself with a mere demonstration, and then fled, leaving his troops to take care of themselves.

The moral effects of this battle were considerable : it showed that the English were not invincible. Though they had been ultimately victorious, it was because the Sikhs abandoned the contest, not by their own prowess. The

origin and growth of beliefs is always difficult to trace, nowhere more so than in India; but it is at least credible that the mutiny of 1857 may have been encouraged by the discovery that the success of the white men was not inevitably decreed by fate. Gough thought it necessary to wait for several weeks, while heavy guns were brought up, before resuming active operations in person. Meanwhile the Sikhs, feeling themselves more or less in the ascendant, crossed the Sutlej with a considerable force, and Sir Harry Smith was sent to protect Loodiana. At Aliwal (Jan. 28, 1846) he completely routed his enemies and drove them back over the Sutlej. This victory led Golab Sing, who was playing a very important part in Sikh affairs, and was aiming at his own aggrandisement, whether in hostility to the English power or by agreement with them, to open negotiations, which elicited from the governor-general the intimation that if the Sikh army were disbanded, he would leave the Sikh monarchy standing. The army however was its own master, and bent on continuing the war for the predominance of their faith.

When at length Gough's artillery arrived, the Sikhs were occupying a position at Sobraon, analogous to that at Ferozeshah, but weaker in that the intrenchments were in parts very badly constructed, and disadvantageous in that the Sutlej flowed behind it, though adequately bridged. On Feb. 10, 1846, Gough moved before daylight to the attack, and by the help of a fog had his artillery in position and his troops formed in front of the enemy before they were seen. Again his impatience would not wait for the cannonade to do its work effectually: the delay of seven weeks since Ferozeshah was rendered virtually useless. The right being the weakest part of the enemy's intrenchments, the plan was that the British left should deliver the real attack, while feints were made by the centre and right. The Sikhs however reinforced their right so strongly that the assailants could make scarcely any impression. Gough seeing this, ordered the infantry of his centre and right to attack in earnest. They suffered heavily, and recoiled for a moment, but they had relieved the left, and gradually the whole British line pressed the Sikhs back. Tej Sing again set the example of flight, and in crossing the bridge broke

the centre of it. Whether this was a deliberate piece of treachery or not, it was fatal to the Sikh army, which, fighting desperately to the last, was cut to pieces or driven into the Sutlej. This victory was decisive : the Sikhs submitted to terms which, while leaving the child Dhuleep Sing nominal Maharajah, made the British resident virtual ruler of the Punjab, from which moreover the eastern provinces were ceded to the East India Company. Cashmere also, which was to be ceded in lieu of a large war indemnity, was sold to Golab Sing, who paid the sum which the Sikh government had promised—a transaction indefensible in principle, and mistaken in policy.

Peace seemed to be so well assured in the Punjab that Sir Henry Lawrence, the first resident at Lahore, went to England for his health without misgivings. His successor, a man of less penetration, was profoundly convinced that no trouble was to be apprehended ; yet all the time the Sikh army and nation were cherishing the purpose of making another effort for independence, if not supremacy in India. The mischief began at Mooltan, an important and well fortified town in the extreme south of the Punjab, where in the spring of 1848 two English officers were murdered by the soldiery. Whether Moolraj, the governor of Mooltan, instigated the deed, is doubtful ; but he cast in his lot with the perpetrators. It is suggested that this rising was part of a wide scheme, and intended to compel the English government to undertake a difficult siege at the worst period of the year. The new governor-general counted it the proper business of the Sikh government to put down what was, formally at least, a rebellion against them. The old commander-in-chief, Lord Gough, doubted the feasibility of reducing Mooltan in summer. Their hand was however forced by Lieut. Edwardes, political officer of a neighbouring district, who raised some native levies, and marched on Mooltan. He was presently joined by a small force under General Whish, and by another of Sikhs despatched from Lahore. The latter presently went over to Moolraj, whereupon General Whish perforce abandoned the siege till he could be reinforced, but remained in the neighbourhood. Successive revolts and defections making it plain that the Sikhs as a nation were resolved on war, Lord Gough col-

lected an army, and crossed the Sutlej in November. He was short of numbers until Mooltan should fall, and was intended only to observe the Sikh army and prevent its attempting any offensive movement. His inveterate habit, however, of rushing at the enemy, regardless of every consideration except the hope of inflicting an immediate blow, showed itself immediately. The Sikh commander, who had no great skill, was of his own accord quitting a strong position at Ramnugur. A reasonable man, who was not completely master of the situation, would have been glad to let him thus throw away an advantage. Gough must needs attack him with infantry, and lost several hundred men in compelling the enemy to do what he was already doing without compulsion. A month later, when changing circumstances rendered it expedient that active operations should be attempted without waiting any longer for Whish, he indulged the same propensity in a most wanton manner.

The Sikh army were posted near Chillianwalla, on the river Jhelum, their front covered by a thick belt of jungle. It was suggested to Lord Gough that he should move so as to place his right obliquely across the enemy's left flank; if this were done, the enemy's line could be enfiladed by artillery, the left driven in on the centre, and the whole army routed.¹ The jungle in front of the Sikhs, which prevented them from making a forward movement, greatly facilitated this manœuvre: if Gough had adhered to his plan, they could only have escaped defeat by retreating. It was afternoon (Jan. 13, 1849) before the English army came within reach of the Sikhs, and the intention was to halt for the night, and engage next morning. The Sikh general, however, either merely to do what mischief he could to the enemy, or, as has been suggested, with the deliberate intention of provoking Gough to attack, pushed forward some guns and opened fire, to which the English artillery replied. Neither party could really see the other for the intervening

¹This method of attack in oblique order, or in *échelon*, is by some writers treated as a great discovery, attributed to Frederick the Great of Prussia. He certainly won by these tactics his most conspicuous victory, Rossbach: but the method itself is in the nature of things, as soon as generals begin to use their brains; it is but one way of bringing superior force to bear on a vital point.

jungle, and the comparatively innocuous cannonade might have been ignored. Lord Gough's fighting temper was roused, and he did precisely what the enemy could have desired: he ordered his infantry to make a direct attack. The dense jungle, in one part nearly a mile in depth, naturally broke up the order of the troops. On the left one brigade of Sir Colin Campbell's division reached the hostile guns, but was overpowered and driven back. The other brigade, under Campbell in person, found itself almost surrounded; for the Sikhs being considerably superior in number, their right extended beyond the British line, and part of it was able to close upon Campbell's flank and rear, though the rest was kept in check by the cavalry on the extreme British left: he however obstinately maintained his ground. The infantry of the right wing under Gilbert was somewhat more successful, thanks in some measure at least to the brilliant services rendered by Dawes' troop of horse artillery. The cavalry however of the right wing were badly defeated. Lord Gough ordered forward his last reserve to fill the gap between Campbell and Gilbert: and after a severe struggle the infantry line succeeded in forcing the Sikhs back, and establishing themselves beyond the jungle. By this time the cavalry of the right wing had re-formed and had been reinforced from the left; there was daylight yet left for a charge, which, pushed home upon the Sikhs, who were already giving way and disordered by hard fighting, might perhaps have been decisive. Gough however did not see, or would not use, the opportunity, and went forward in person to the infantry. They were in a sense victorious, but the enemy was not routed, and might resume the action. There was neither food nor water within reach. It was deemed necessary to withdraw from the hard-won field to Chillianwalla, abandoning the wounded and the captured guns, that could not be removed in the dark. To do this was virtually to acknowledge defeat, though fortunately the Sikhs had lost so severely that no evil consequences followed. A braver soldier than Gough never lived; but few battles are recorded in which the general showed himself more incompetent than at Chillianwalla, none in which the blunders of the commander were better redeemed by the courage of the soldiers.

More than a month of comparative inaction followed. The Sikh army was largely reinforced, and used every effort to tempt Gough to another battle before he could be joined by the troops now set free by the fall of Mooltan. Gough however either had at length learned prudence, or yielded to the counsels of others, and steadily refused to fight until it suited him. On February 21 took place the final battle of the campaign, in front of the town of Gujerat. The Sikhs occupied a position of no strength, for the two streams on their right and left were at that season easily passable anywhere. They might easily have found a better position in the immediate neighbourhood: but nothing could have saved them from defeat, unless Lord Gough had reverted to his favourite tactics. The British army was very superior in artillery; probably no army of anything like equal numbers had ever before been so strong in this arm, whether for the weight of metal, the number of guns, or the precision of fire. The Sikhs understood artillery well, and trusted to it greatly; and they would be naturally all the more impressed by finding the preponderance against them.¹ The plan of attack was simply that after the Sikh artillery had been silenced, the infantry should advance, and that Sir Colin Campbell on the left should turn the right of the Sikhs, this being the flank by which their line of retreat could be most effectually threatened. This programme was in the main carried out, though Gough's impatience ordered the infantry forward a little too soon. But for this hardly any of the infantry need have been seriously engaged. The Sikhs resisted with their usual bravery, but were ultimately forced to abandon the field; and their retreat was converted into a rout by the English cavalry and horse artillery. A few days later the remains of the army laid down their arms, and the Sikh nation submitted. After due deliberation the British government determined to annex the Punjab. The

¹ There is a story that Major George Lawrence, then a prisoner, communicated to his brother, and so to the commander-in-chief, the surprise which the Sikh officers had expressed to him at the small use made of the English artillery in previous battles. This may be true, but there is no need to suppose that this influenced the battle of Gujerat: any officer of ordinary judgment would have done at all times what Gough did only in his last battle.

administration of the new province was entrusted to the best men in India, headed first by Henry and then by John Lawrence, with the result that eight years later, in the terrible strain of the Mutiny, the Punjab was a main source of strength. The Sikhs, who had been the most dangerous enemies of British rule in India, won over by good government, and largely by the personal influence of the Lawrences, became our most faithful and valuable supporters.

The history of the Indian Mutiny must be written either at length, or in the briefest possible way. In the whole region of the Ganges, between lower Bengal and the Punjab, the sepoys with few exceptions revolted, and murdered in most cases their English officers. The English, isolated in small bodies, defended themselves as best they could, with the obstinacy of their race, and the determination of men who felt that surrender, while certainly disgraceful and injurious to the general cause, gave no certainty of rescue for their own lives. In most important places, as for instance in Lucknow, they held their ground: in a few, as in Delhi, the rebels gained complete possession. The people generally, alive to the advantages of British rule in ensuring peace and good government, but unable to understand their masters, and especially their holding the balance even between Hindoos and Mahommedans, remained on the whole passive. The native princes, whose territory, roughly speaking, bounded on the south the disturbed region, remained generally faithful to England, notably the great Mahratta princes, Holkar and Sindia, though the adopted son of the last Peishwa, whose succession the British government had refused to acknowledge, was naturally a bitter enemy. Had they all made common cause with the insurgents it is hard to see how the empire could have been saved, even though the Punjab needed no troops, and the Madras and Bombay sepoys remained on the whole true to their colours. Gradually as more and more British soldiers became available, the revolt was crushed out, though not without great exertion and much time.

The point on which the largest amount of attention was concentrated was Lucknow, the capital of Oude. The annexation, a measure rendered absolutely necessary by the scandalous oppression of the king, had been too recent for

even Sir Henry Lawrence to have won over the population, who furnished a very large proportion of the rebel sepoys. Hence the difficulty of forcing the way to the capital was exceptionally great, and it had to be done three times. The original garrison was but small, the 32nd regiment and about 500 native soldiers who remained faithful. There were many English women and children shut up with them. They had no real defences, inadequate supplies, and almost no servants, and it was the hottest season. After Sir Henry Lawrence was killed, Colonel Inglis of the 32nd held the command, and proved himself fully capable of making the most of his very meagre resources. At the outset it was expected that they could hold out for about a fortnight: it was eighty-seven days before Havelock was able to force his way to Lucknow, and then it was only to reinforce, not to rescue. The heroic endurance of those long weeks cannot be described in sober prose: no English reader can wish to see it attempted, with Tennyson's noble poem in his memory. Havelock had had long and severe fighting in the neighbourhood of Cawnpore, before he could even begin to advance towards Lucknow. At the last moment General Outram was sent to supersede him, the government apparently thinking, most unreasonably, that it was Havelock's fault that more had not been achieved. But Outram, the 'Bayard of India,' would not rob Havelock of the credit: in his first and only general order issued on joining the little army, he announced that he waived his superior rank, and would accompany the force in his civil capacity as the new chief commissioner of Oude. Havelock and Outram forced their way into Lucknow on September 28, when Outram of course assumed the chief authority. His first idea was to withdraw, but he found that transport could not be provided for the women and children and the large number of sick and wounded. He therefore resolved to await relief from Sir Colin Campbell, which could not be very long in coming. Campbell however was hampered by many difficulties before he could leave Cawnpore: and it was not till November 17 that he fought his way into Lucknow. The storming of the Secunderbagh, a fortified palace in the outskirts of the city, and of the Shah Nujeeb, a mosque near it, are among the most sensational feats authentically recorded. They could

not be better told than in the admirable narrative of Mr. Forbes Mitchell, then a sergeant in the 93rd Highlanders, which played a conspicuous part in the relief. This time the garrison was withdrawn, for Campbell had not men enough, if he occupied Lucknow in force, for the critical operations which awaited him around Cawnpore: but the gallant Havelock died, worn out, before the retreat began. Outram remained in a fortified position at the Alumbagh not far from Lucknow: and after disposing of other duties Campbell returned to make a final end of the Lucknow rebels. This time the forces available were large, the operations could be conducted in a methodical way without undue waste of life, and the work was done effectually.

More important in its moral effect, more remarkable as an instance both of political and military audacity, was the reconquest of Delhi. The imperial city had but a small force of sepoys stationed in it, when the mutiny broke out at Meerut, forty miles off. Many of the mutineers hastened to Delhi, flying, it would seem, from the expected vengeance of the English troops at Meerut, who however were detained inactive by the hopeless incapacity of their general. The Delhi sepoys rose at the news, and slaughtered all the English in the city: those who lived outside fled as best they could. Lieutenant Willoughby, in charge of the great magazine, defended it for some time, aided by eight men only; and then blew it up, and a thousand rebels with it. The ancient capital, with all its resources, was for the time lost: and the mutineers proclaimed the restoration of the Mogul emperor, who, old and blind, resided in the palace, though this did not mean his assumption of any authority. The supreme importance of recovering Delhi was obvious, but it was not till three weeks after the outbreak that General Barnard, who had become commander-in-chief by the death of General Anson, marched for Delhi, ordering all that could be spared from Meerut to join him. Wilson with the Meerut force had to fight his way, and after his junction with Barnard a considerable battle had to be fought; but on June 8 the army established itself in the old garrison cantonments, on a long ridge which looks down on the city from the west and north-west. It was obviously far too small to besiege Delhi in any real sense. It could

furnish visible evidence that England had not abandoned the idea of reconquest, but it could do no more without reinforcements and a siege train, unless by a direct and immediate assault. Some of the ardent spirits in the army strongly urged General Barnard to hazard an assault; and if he had done so, he might very possibly have succeeded; for the odds against him were not much greater than when Delhi was taken three months later, and the moral effect of prompt audacity is always great, especially in India. He however thought the consequences of failure too disastrous to be risked without a greater chance of success. Consequently Delhi became more and more the focus of the mutiny, to which streamed all rebels not already in organised bodies: and its fall was a greater material blow to their cause. This however can hardly be set against the value of an early proof that the British could and would re-establish their power. It requires an extraordinary man to realise that the risk of failure is no greater because the result of failure will be ruinous, and to run the risk with a full determination not to fail. Had Nicholson, or Havelock, or Edwardes, been in command before Delhi, the risk would have been faced. Barnard however was not an extraordinary man: the early opportunity once let slip, nothing could be done but hold on. The rebels, daily gaining in number and possessing unlimited stores of ammunition, made repeated attacks. The British army, though invariably successful in their encounters, and slowly gaining more and more ground, could not in any sense be said to besiege the city: they were not far from being themselves beleaguered. Moreover no help could come except from one quarter. The whole mass of the revolted territory lay between Delhi and Calcutta. The means of conquering Delhi must be furnished, if at all, from the Punjab.

England has never been better served than by the men who at the crisis of the mutiny governed the Punjab and adjoining provinces. The country was full of disaffected regiments, but they were nearly all disarmed without mischief: where material force to compel obedience was lacking, the calm assumption of irresistible authority answered nearly as well. Nowhere did the mutineers obtain the

superiority, though a certain number made off towards the rebel ranks at Delhi. After a little observation of the temper of the Sikh population, Sir John Lawrence took the bold step of enlisting them by thousands, to take the place of the Mahomedan and Hindoo mutineers. The Sikhs had found the new government just: they saw its attitude of perfect confidence in its own strength, and they served it as devotedly as they had followed Runjeet Sing. Not only did Lawrence win the Sikhs to remain peaceful themselves, and keep down the elements of disorder on the borders, thus setting free the English regiments; he was able also to contribute thousands of Sikh troops of all arms to the recovery of Delhi. The delay increased his difficulties, for it weakened the belief in English invincibility. Regiments mutinied that had hitherto remained quiet: the wild tribes of the frontier, the non-Sikh parts of the population, were in a ferment. Lawrence however held firmly to his conviction that Delhi was the paramount consideration: he even despatched to Delhi the "movable column" which had been organised in the first days of the mutiny to meet emergencies. This force was commanded by John Nicholson, possibly the greatest of the many heroes of Anglo-Indian story, and he became the soul of the besieging army.

On the arrival of the siege train early in September all felt that the crisis was come. Archdale Wilson, who had succeeded to the command on Barnard's death, was still doubtful of success, but he yielded with a good grace to bolder counsels. From the nature of the case nothing could be done but to batter those portions of the walls which were within reach from the English position, and then assault. After a few days' bombardment breaches had been made in the northern walls, one in the water-bastion close to the north-eastern angle, one near the Cashmere gate, which were deemed sufficient. On September 14 the attack was made in four columns; it was not supposed that the whole of the great city, swarming with desperate men, could be conquered at once, but if a firm footing were once gained within the walls, the rest of the work might be done gradually. One column under Jones was to storm the water-bastion, another under Nicholson, the breach near the Cashmere gate: a third under Campbell was to blow

in the Cashmere gate, while Reid with the fourth was to take the suburbs on the western side of the city, and make for the Lahore gate, in the middle of the western face. The two first columns advanced first, and both were successful in making good their footing within the walls. While Nicholson was fighting his way house by house onwards, Jones turning to the right made his way along the walls. It would seem as if in the confusion all parties had lost their bearings, or else Jones should apparently have taken the Cashmere gate in flank, and saved the obvious risk of blowing it in. Ultimately, Jones found himself on the west side of the city, near the Lahore gate, but did not attempt to seize it, his rendezvous with Nicholson being at the Cabul gate further north, to which he retired. This waste of a chance was not of as much importance as it might otherwise have been, for Reid's attack failed for want of guns, with which the enemy were well provided. He himself was struck down, and all his men could do was to hold firmly the extreme end of the previous position. When Nicholson at length was able to force his way to the Cabul gate, and meet Jones, the enemy was in great strength there, and it would perhaps have been better policy to be content with what had been gained on that day. Nicholson however pushed forward towards the Lahore gate, and was mortally wounded while attempting the impossible. Meanwhile the Cashmere gate had been blown in: two engineer officers, with three sergeants and a bugler, were told off for this most difficult of military duties, for it requires not merely courage to face almost certain death, but perfect coolness to deal with the unexpected. Both the officers were badly wounded, two of the sergeants were killed, the third barely escaped being crushed in the explosion, but the powder was fired, and the gate blown to pieces. Campbell had no difficulty in entering the city, but he also failed to penetrate far. The day of the storm closed with no more success than to have taken possession of the northern edge of the city, and this at a cost of 1200 men, besides Nicholson, who was worth all the rest. The first blow however was really decisive: the rest of the city had to be conquered piecemeal, but the heart of the resistance was gone. The old Mogul emperor, who had for three months been the

puppet of the mutineers, was taken prisoner. His sons were shot without trial by Hodson, commander of a famous regiment of irregular cavalry, a deed for which Hodson, who acted on his own responsibility, has been very strongly condemned and as warmly defended. Terrible severity was at first employed in punishing the rebels at Delhi, for which there was the excuse that nowhere had helpless women and children been so brutally murdered. There were some who even wished to destroy the city, as an example. Thanks to Sir John Lawrence, however, humane counsels prevailed, and the peaceful inhabitants of Delhi, who had been grievously ill-treated by the mutineers, returned to their homes.

The effect of the fall of Delhi was not as great as it would have been had Barnard stormed the place in June : but it put an end to the strain in the Punjab, and followed as it soon was by the relief of Lucknow, marked the definite turn of the tide. From that time onwards it was visible to all India that the English rule would be restored. The mutineers still fought on, but in fury and despair rather than expecting success. Great as was the danger at the outset, narrow as was the margin between the English in India and total destruction, the mutiny ended in strengthening our hold in the country, besides furnishing the most vivid testimony in all history to the maxim that nothing is impossible, while life remains, to those who have courage and coolness.

APPENDIX

BATTLES DESCRIBED

Agincourt	...	...	...	October 25	1415
Albuera	...	...	...	May 16	1811
Alma	...	...	...	September 20	1854
Assye	...	...	...	August 23	1803
Balaclava	...	...	...	October 25	1854
Bannockburn	...	...	...	June 24	1314
Barnet	...	...	...	April 14	1471
Blenheim	...	...	...	August 13	1704
Busaco	...	...	...	September 27	1810
Chillianwalla	...	...	...	January 13	1849
Crecy	...	...	...	August 26	1346
Dunbar	...	...	...	September 3	1650
Edgehill	...	...	...	October 23	1642
Evesham	...	...	...	August 4	1265
Falkirk	...	...	...	July 22	1298
Ferozeshah	...	...	...	December 21	1845
Flodden	...	...	...	September 9	1513
Fontenoy	...	...	...	May 11	1745
Gujerat	...	...	...	February 21	1849
Hastings	...	...	...	October 14	1066
Inkerman	...	...	...	November 5	1854
Lewes	...	...	...	May 14	1264
Marston Moor	...	...	...	July 2	1644
Minden	...	...	...	August 1	1759
Naseby	...	...	...	June 14	1645
Oudenarde	...	...	...	July 11	1708
Plassy	...	...	...	June 23	1757
Poitiers	...	...	...	September 19	1356
Quebec	...	...	...	September 13	1759
Ramillies	...	...	...	May 23	1706
Salamanca	...	...	...	July 22	1812
Sobraon	...	...	...	February 10	1846
Stamford Bridge	...	...	...	September 25	1066
Talavera	...	...	...	July 28	1809
Tewkesbury	...	...	...	May 4	1471
Towton	...	...	...	March 29	1461
Vittoria	...	...	...	June 21	1813
Waterloo	...	...	...	June 18	1815

BATTLES MENTIONED

Aliwal 1846	Maida 1806
Almanza 1707	Malplaquet 1709
Argaum 1803	Marengo 1800
Aspern 1809	Moodkee 1845
Atherton Moor 1643	Mortimer's Cross ... 1461
Auberoche 1345	Nevil's Cross 1346
Cambuskenneth 1297	Newbury 1643
Caveripak 1752	Newbury 1644
Cheriton 1644	Northampton 1460
Corunna 1809	Patay 1429
Courtrai 1302	Porto Novo 1781
Crevant 1423	Preston Pans 1745
Culloden 1746	Quatre Bras 1815
Dettingen 1743	Ramnugur 1848
Douro 1809	St. Alban's 1461
Falkirk 1746	Schellenberg 1704
Formigny 1451	Steinkirk 1692
Fuentes d'Onoro ... 1811	Stow-on-the-Wold ... 1645
Fulford 1066	Thermopylae B.C. 480
Halidon Hill 1333	Toulouse 1814
Herrings 1429	Turin 1706
Homildon 1402	Verneuil 1424
Jena 1806	Vimiero 1808
Landen 1693	Wakefield 1460
Laswaree 1803	Worcester 1651
Leuctra B.C. 371	Wynendael 1708
Ligny 1815	

SIEGES

Almeida ... 1810 and 1811	Lucknow 1857
Badajos ... 1811 and 1812	Mons 1709
Burgos 1812	Mooltan 1848
Calais 1346-47	Orleans 1428-29
Ciudad Rodrigo ... 1812	Oxford 1645
Delhi 1857	Quebec 1759
Gloucester 1643	Sebastopol 1854-55
Harfleur 1415	Stirling 1314
Herat 1838	York 1644
Lille 1708	

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