VARIOUS

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Содержание

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MARLBOROUGH. No. II. [1]

It might have been expected, that after the march into Bavaria had demonstrated the military genius of the Duke of Marlborough, and the battle of Blenheim had in so decisive a manner broken the enemy's power, the principal direction of military affairs would have been entrusted to that consummate commander; and that the Allied cabinets, without presuming to interfere in the management of the campaigns, would have turned all their efforts to place at his disposal forces adequate to carry into execution the mighty designs which he meditated, and had shown himself so well qualified to carry into execution. It was quite the reverse. The Allied cabinets did nothing. They did worse than nothing – they interfered only to do mischief. Their principal object after this appeared to be to cramp the efforts of this great general, to overrule his bold designs, to tie

[1] Continued from No. I., in July 1845, Vol. lviii. p. 1.

down his aspiring genius. Each looked only to his own separate objects, and nothing could make them see that they were to be gained only by promoting the general objects of the alliance. Relieved from the danger of instant subjugation by the victory of Blenheim, and the retreat of the French army across the Rhine, the German powers relapsed into their usual state of supineness, lukewarmness, and indifference. No efforts of Marlborough could induce the Dutch either to enlarge their contingent, or even render that already in the field fit for active service. The English force was not half of what the national strength was capable of sending forth. Parliament would not hear of any thing like an adequate expenditure. Thus the golden opportunity, never likely to be regained, of profiting by the consternation of the enemy after the battle of Blenheim, and their weakness after forty thousand of their best troops had been lost to their armies, was allowed to pass away; and the war was permitted to dwindle into one of posts and sieges, when, by a vigorous effort, it might have been concluded in the next campaign.[2]

It was not thus with the French. The same cause which

[2] "C'est le retard de toutes les troupes Allemandes qui dérange nos affaires. Je ne saurais vous expliquer la situation où nous sommes qu'en vous envoyant les deux lettres ci jointes, – l'une que je viens de recevoir du Prince de Bade, et l'autre la réponse que je lui fais. En vérité notre état est plus à plaindre que vous ne croyez; mais je vous prie que cela n'aille pas outre. *Nous perdons la plus belle occasion du monde – manque des troupes qui devaient être ici il y a deja longtemps*. Pour le reste de l'artillerie Hollandaise, et les provisions qui peuvent arriver de Mayence, vous les arrêterez, s'il vous plait, pour quelques jours, jusqu'à ce que je vous en écrive." —*Marlborough à M. Pesters; Trêves, 31 Mai 1705. Despatches*, II. 60-1.

had loosened the efforts of the confederates, had inspired unwonted vigour into their councils. The Rhine was crossed by the Allies; the French armies had been hurled with disgrace out of Germany; the territory of the Grand Monarque was threatened both from the side of Alsace and Flanders; and a formidable insurrection in the Cevennes both distracted the force and threatened the peace of the kingdom. But against all these evils Louis made head. Never had the superior vigour and perseverance of a monarchy over that of a confederacy been more clearly evinced. Marshal Villars had been employed in the close of the preceding year to appease the insurrection in the Cevennes, and his measures were at once so vigorous and conciliatory, that before the end of the following winter the disturbances were entirely appeased. In consequence of this, the forces employed in that quarter became disposable; and by this means, and the immense efforts made by the government over the whole kingdom, the armies on the frontier were so considerably augmented, that Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria took the field in the Low Countries at the head of seventy-five thousand men, while Marshal Marsin on the Upper Rhine, covered Alsace with thirty thousand. Those armies were much larger than any which the Allies could bring against them; for although it had been calculated that Marlborough was to be at the head of ninety thousand men on the Moselle on the 1st May, yet such had been the dilatory conduct of the States-general and the German princes, that in the beginning of June there were scarcely thirty

thousand men collected round his standards; and in Flanders and on the Upper Rhine the enemy's relative superiority was still greater.

The plan of the campaign of 1705, based on the supposition that these great forces were to be at his disposal, concerted between him and Prince Eugene, was in the highest degree bold and decisive. It was fixed that, early in spring, ninety thousand men should be assembled in the country between the Moselle and the Saar, and, after establishing their magazines and base of operations at Treves and Traerbach, they should penetrate, in two columns into Lorraine; that the column under Marlborough in person should advance along the course of Moselle, and the other, under the Margrave of Baden, by the valley of the Saar, and that Saar-Louis should be invested before the French army had time to take the field. In this way the whole fortresses of Flanders would be avoided, and the war, carried into the enemy's territory, would assail France on the side where her iron barrier was most easily pierced through. But the slowness of the Dutch, and backwardness of the Germans, rendered this well-conceived plan abortive, and doomed the English general, for the whole of a campaign which promised such important advantages, to little else but difficulty, delay, and vexation. Marlborough's enthusiasm, great as it was, nearly sank under the repeated disappointments which he experienced at this juncture; and, guarded as he was, it exhaled in several bitter complaints in his

confidential correspondence.[3] But, like a true patriot and man of perseverance, he did not give way to despair when he found nearly all that had been promised him awanting; but perceiving the greater designs impracticable, from the want of all the means by which they could be carried into execution, prepared to make the most of the diminutive force which alone was at his disposal.

At length, some of the German reinforcements having arrived, Marlborough, in the beginning of June, though still greatly inferior to the enemy, commenced operations. Such was the terror inspired by his name, and the tried valour of the English troops, that Villars remained on the defensive, and soon retreated. Without firing a shot, he evacuated a strong woody country which he occupied, and retired to a strong defensive position, extending from Haute Sirk on the right, to the Nivelles on the left, and communicating in the rear with Luxembourg, Thionville, and Saar-Louis. This position was so strong, that

[3] Even so late as the 8th June, Marlborough wrote. – "J'ai d'abord pris poste dans ce camp, où je me trouve à portée d'entreprendre la siège de Saar-Louis, si les troupes qui devaient avoir été ici il y a quelques jours m'avaient joint. Cependant je n'ai pas jusqu'ici un seul homme qui ne soit à la solde d'Angleterre ou de la Hollande. Les troupes de Bade ne peuvent arriver avant le 21 au plutôt; quelques-uns des Prussiens sont encore plus en arrière; et pour les trois mille chevaux que les princes voisins devaient nous fournir pour méner l'artillerie et les munitions, et sans quoi il nous sera impossible d'agir, je n'en ai aucune nouvelle, nonobstant toutes mes instances. J'ai grand peur même qu'il n'y ait, à l'heure même que je vous écris celle-ci, des regulations en chemin de la Haye qui détruiront entièrement tous nos projets de ce côté. Cette situation me donne tant d'inquiétude que je ne saurais me dispenser de vous prier d'en vouloir part à sa Majesté Impériale." —*Marlborough au Comte de Wroteslau; Elft, 8 Juin 1705. Despatches*, II. 85.

it was hopeless to attempt to force it without heavy cannon; and Marlborough's had not yet arrived, from the failure of the German princes to furnish the draught-horses they had promised. For nine weary days he remained in front of the French position, counting the hours till the guns and reinforcements came up; but such was the tardiness of the German powers, and the universal inefficiency of the inferior princes and potentates, that they never made their appearance. The English general was still anxiously awaiting the promised supplies, when intelligence arrived from the right of so alarming a character as at once changed the theatre of operations, and fixed him for the remainder of the campaign in the plains of Flanders.

It was the rapid progress which Marshal Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria, at the head of seventy-five thousand men, were making in the heart of Flanders, which rendered this change necessary. General Overkirk was there entrusted with the army intended to cover Holland; but it was greatly inferior to the enemy in point of numerical amount, and still more so in the quality and composition of the troops of which it was composed. Aware of his superiority, and of the timid character of the government which was principally interested in that army, Villeroi pushed his advantages to the utmost. He advanced boldly upon the Meuse, carried by assault the fortress of Huys, and, marching upon Liege, occupied the town without much resistance, and laid siege to the citadel. Overkirk, in his lines before Maestricht, was unable even to keep the field. The utmost alarm seized

upon the United Provinces. They already in imagination saw Louis XIV. a second time at the gates of Amsterdam. Courier after courier was dispatched to Marlborough, soliciting relief in the most urgent terms; and it was hinted, that if effectual protection were not immediately given, Holland would be under the necessity of negotiating for a separate peace. There was not a moment to be lost: the Dutch were now as hard pressed as the Austrians had been in the preceding year, and in greater alarm than the Emperor was before the battle of Blenheim. A cross march like that into Bavaria could alone reinstate affairs. Without a moment's hesitation, Marlborough took his determination.

On the 17th June, without communicating his designs to any one, or even without saying a word of the alarming intelligence he had received, he ordered the whole army to be under arms at midnight, and setting out shortly after, he marched, without intermission, eighteen miles to the rear. Having thus gained a march upon the enemy, so as to avoid the risk of being pursued or harassed in his retreat, he left General D'Aubach with eleven battalions and twelve squadrons to cover the important magazines at Treves and Saarbruck; and himself, with the remainder of the army, about thirty thousand strong, marched rapidly in the direction of Maestricht. He was in hopes of being able, like the Consul Nero, in the memorable cross march from Apulia to the Metaurus in Roman story, to attack the enemy with his own army united to that of Overkirk, before he was aware of his approach; but in this he was disappointed.

Villeroi got notice of his movement, and instantly raising the siege of the citadel of Liege, withdrew, though still superior in number to the united forces of the enemy, within the shelter of the lines he had prepared and fortified with great care on the Meuse. Marlborough instantly attacked and carried Huys on the 11th July. But the satisfaction derived from having thus arrested the progress of the enemy in Flanders, and wrested from him the only conquest of the campaign, soon received a bitter alloy. Like Napoleon in his later years, the successes he gained in person were almost always overbalanced by the disasters sustained through the blunders or treachery of his lieutenants. Hardly had Huys opened its gates, when advices were received that D'Aubach, instead of obeying his orders, and defending the magazines at Treves and Saarbruck to the last extremity, had fled on the first appearance of a weak French detachment, and burned the whole stores which it had cost so much time and money to collect. This was a severe blow to Marlborough, for it at once rendered impracticable the offensive movement into Lorraine, on which his heart was so set, and from which he had anticipated such important results. It was no longer possible to carry the war into the enemy's territory, or turn, by an irruption into Lorraine, the whole fortresses of the enemy in Flanders. The tardiness of the German powers in the first instance, the terrors of the Dutch, and misconduct of D'Aubach in the last, had caused that ably conceived design entirely to miscarry. Great was the mortification of the English general at this signal disappointment

of his most warmly cherished hopes; it even went so far that he had thoughts of resigning his command.[4] But instead of abandoning himself to despair, he set about, like the King of Prussia in after times, the preparation of a stroke which should reinstate his affairs by the terror with which it inspired the enemy, and the demonstration of inexhaustible resources it afforded in himself.

The position occupied by the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Villeroi was so strong that it was regarded as impregnable, and in truth it was so to a front attack. With its right resting on Marche aux Dames on the Meuse, it stretched through Leau to the strong and important fortress of Antwerp. This line was long, and of course liable to be broken through at points; but such was the skill with which every vulnerable point had been strengthened and fortified by the French engineers, that it was no easy matter to say where an impression could be made. Wherever a marsh or a stream intervened, the most skilful use had been

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[4] "Par ces contretemps tous nos projets de ce côté-ci sont évanouis, au moins pour le present; et j'espère que V.A. me fera la justice de croire que j'ai fait tout ce qui a dependu de moi pour les faire réussir. Si je pouvais avoir l'honneur d'entretenir V.A. pour une seule heure, je lui dirai bien des choses, par où elle verrait combien je suis à plaindre. J'avais 94 escadrons et 72 bataillons, tous à la solde de l'Angleterre et de la Hollande; de sorte que, si l'on m'avait secondé nous aurions une des plus glorieuses campagnes qu'on pouvait souhaiter. Après un tel traitment, V.A., je suis sûr, ne m'aurait pas blâmé si j'avais pris la résolution *de ne jamais plus servir*, comme je ne ferai pas aussi, je vous assure, après cette campagne, à moins que de pouvoir prendre des mésures avec l'empereur sur lesquelles je pourrais entièrement me fier." —*Marlborough à Eugène, 21 Juin 1705. Despatches*, II. 124.

made of it; while forts and redoubts, plentifully mounted with heavy cannon, both commanded all the approaches to the lines, and formed so many *points d'appui* to its defenders in case of disaster. Such a position, defended by seventy thousand men, directed by able generals, might well be deemed impregnable. But Marlborough, with an inferior force, resolved to attempt it. In doing so, however, he had difficulties more formidable to overcome than even the resistance of the enemy in front; the timidity of the authorities at the Hague, the nervousness and responsibility of the Dutch generals, were more to be dreaded than Villeroi's redoubts. It required all the consummate address of the English general, aided by the able co-operation of General Overkirk, to get liberty from the Dutch authorities to engage in any offensive undertaking. At length, however, after infinite difficulty, a council of war, at headquarters, agreed to support any undertaking which might be deemed advisable; and Marlborough instantly set about putting his design in execution.

The better to conceal the real point of attack, he gave out that a march to the Moselle was to be immediately undertaken; and to give a colour to the report, the corps which had been employed in the siege of Huys was not brought forward to the front. At the same time Overkirk was detached to the Allied left towards Bourdine, and Marlborough followed with a considerable force, ostensibly to support him. So completely was Villeroi imposed upon, that he drew large reinforcements from the centre to his extreme right; and soon forty thousand men were grouped round

the sources of the Little Gheet on his extreme right. By this means the centre was seriously weakened; and Marlborough instantly assembled, with every imaginable precaution to avoid discovery, all his disposable forces to attack the weakened part of the lines. The corps hitherto stationed on the Meuse was silently brought up to the front; Marlborough put himself at the head of his own English and German troops, whom he had carried with him from the Moselle; and at eight at night, on the 17th July, the whole began to march, all profoundly ignorant of the service on which they were to be engaged. Each trooper was ordered to carry a truss of hay at his saddle-bow, as if a long march was in contemplation. At the same instant on which the columns under Marlborough's orders commenced their march, Overkirk repassed the Mehaigne on the left, and, hid by darkness, fell into the general line of the advance of the Allied troops.

No fascines or gabions had been brought along to pass the ditch, for fear of exciting alarm in the lines. The trusses of hay alone were trusted to for that purpose, which would be equally effectual, and less likely to awaken suspicion. At four in the morning, the heads of the columns, wholly unperceived, were in front of the French works, and, covered by a thick fog, traversed the morass, passed the Gheet despite its steep banks, carried the castle of Wange, and, rushing forward with a swift pace, crossed the ditch on the trusses of hay, and, in three weighty columns, scaled the rampart, and broke into the enemy's works. Hitherto entire success had attended this admirably planned attack; but

the alarm was now given; a fresh corps of fifteen thousand men, under M. D'Allegré, hastily assembled, and a heavy fire was opened upon the Allies, now distinctly visible in the morning light, from a commanding battery. Upon this, Marlborough put himself at the head of Lumley's English horse, and, charging vigorously, succeeded, though not till he had sustained one repulse, in breaking through the line thus hastily formed. In this charge the Duke narrowly escaped with his life, in a personal conflict with a Bavarian officer. The Allies now crowded in, in great numbers, and the French, panic-struck, fled on all sides, abandoning the whole centre of their intrenchments to the bold assailants. Villeroi, who had become aware, from the retreat of Overkirk in his front, that some attack was in contemplation, but ignorant where the tempest was to fall, remained all night under arms. At length, attracted by the heavy fire, he approached the scene of action in the centre, only in time to see that the position was broken through, and the lines no longer tenable. He drew off his whole troops accordingly, and took up a new position, nearly at right angles to the former, stretching from Elixheim towards Tirlemont. It was part of the design of the Duke to have intercepted the line of retreat of the French, and prevented them from reaching the Dyle, to which they were tending; but such was the obstinacy and slowness of the Dutch generals, that nothing could persuade them to make any further exertion, and, in defiance of the orders and remonstrances alike of Marlborough and Overkirk, they pitched their tents, and

refused to take any part in the pursuit. The consequence was, that Villeroi collected his scattered forces, crossed the Dyle in haste, and took up new ground, about eighteen miles in the rear, with his left sheltered by the cannon of Louvain. But, though the disobedience and obstinacy of the Dutch thus intercepted Marlborough in the career of victory, and rendered his success much less complete than it otherwise would have been, yet had a mighty blow been struck, reflecting the highest credit on the skill and resolution of the English general. The famous lines, on which the French had been labouring for months, had been broken through and carried, during a nocturnal conflict of a few hours; they had lost all their redoubts and ten pieces of cannon, with which they were armed; M. D'Allegré, with twelve hundred prisoners, had been taken; and the army which lately besieged Liege and threatened Maestricht, was now driven back, defeated and discouraged, to seek refuge under the cannon of Louvain.

Overkirk, who had so ably co-operated with Marlborough in this glorious victory, had the magnanimity as well as candour, in his despatch to the States-general, to ascribe the success which had been gained entirely to the skill and courage of the English general.[5] But the Dutch generals, who had interrupted his career of success, had the malignity to charge the consequences of their misconduct on his head, and even carried their effrontery

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[5] "It is a justice I owe to the Duke of Marlborough to state, that the whole honour of the enterprise, executed with so much skill and courage, is entirely due to him." —*Overkirk to States-general, 19th July 1705. Coxe*, II. 151.

so far as to accuse him of supineness in not following up his success, and cutting off the enemy's retreat to the Dyle, when it was themselves who had refused to obey his orders to do so. Rains of extraordinary severity fell from the 19th to the 23d July, which rendered all offensive operations impracticable, and gave Villeroi time, of which he ably availed himself, to strengthen his position behind the Dyle to such a degree, as to render it no longer assailable with any prospect of success. The precious moment, when the enemy might have been driven from it in the first tumult of success, had been lost.

The subsequent success in the Flemish campaign by no means corresponded to its brilliant commencement. The jealousy of the Dutch ruined every thing. This gave rise to recriminations and jealousies, which rendered it impracticable even for the great abilities and consummate address of Marlborough to effect any thing of importance with the heterogeneous array, with the nominal command of which he was invested. The English general dispatched his adjutant-general, Baron Hompesch, to represent to the States-general the impossibility of going on longer with such a divided responsibility; but, though they listened to his representations, nothing could induce them to put their troops under the direct orders of the commander-in-chief. They still had "field deputies," as they were called who were invested with the entire direction of the Dutch troops; and as they were civilians, wholly unacquainted with military affairs, they had recourse on every occasion to the very fractious generals who

already had done so much mischief to the common cause. In vain Marlborough repeatedly endeavoured, as he himself said, "to cheat them into victory," by getting their consent to measures, of which they did not see the bearing, calculated to achieve that object; their timid, jealous spirit interposed on every occasion to mar important operations, and the corps they commanded was too considerable to admit of their being undertaken without their co-operation. After nine days' watching the enemy across the Dyle, Marlborough proposed to cross the river near Louvain, and attack the enemy; the Dutch Deputies interposed their negative, to Marlborough's infinite mortification, as, in his own words, "it spoiled the whole campaign."[6]

Worn out with these long delays, Marlborough at length resolved at all hazards to pass the river, trusting that the Dutch, when they saw the conflict once seriously engaged, would not desert him. But in this he was mistaken. The Dutch not only failed to execute the part assigned them in the combined enterprise, but sent information of his designs to the enemy.

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[6] "On Wednesday, it was unanimously resolved we should pass the Dyle, but that afternoon there fell so much rain as rendered it impracticable; but the fair weather this morning made me determine to attempt it. Upon this the deputies held a council with all the generals of Overkirk's army, who have unanimously retracted their opinions, and declared the passage of the river too dangerous, which resolution, in my opinion, *will ruin the whole campaign*. They have, at the same time, proposed to me to attack the French on their left; but I know they will let that fall also, as soon as they see the ground. It is very mortifying to meet more obstruction from friends than from enemies; but that is now the case with me; yet I dare not show my resentment for fear of alarming the Dutch." —*Marlborough to Godolphin, 29th July 1705. Coxe*, II. 158.

The consequence was, Villeroi was on his guard. All the Duke's demonstrations could not draw his attention from his left, where the real attack was intended; but nevertheless the Duke pushed on the English and Germans under his orders, who forced the passage in the most gallant style. But when the Duke ordered the Dutch generals to support the attack of the Duke of Wirtemberg, who had crossed the river, and established himself in force on the opposite bank, they refused to move their men. The consequence was that this attack, as well planned and likely to succeed as the famous forcing of the lines a fortnight before, proved abortive; and Marlborough, burning with indignation, was obliged to recall his troops when on the high-road to victory, and when the river had been crossed, before they had sustained a loss of a hundred men. So general was the indignation at this shameful return on the part of the Dutch generals to Marlborough for all the services he had rendered to their country, that it drew forth the strongest expressions from one of his ablest, but most determined opponents, Lord Bolingbroke, who wrote to him at this juncture: – "It was very melancholy to find the malice of Slangenberg, the fears of Dopf, and the ignorance of the deputies, to mention no more, prevail so to disappoint your Grace, to their prejudice as well as ours. We hope the Dutch have agreed to what your Grace desires of them, without which the war becomes a jest to our enemies, *and can end in nothing but an ill peace, which is certain ruin to us.*"[7]

[7] Bolingbroke to Marlborough, August 18, 1705. *Coxe*, II. 160.

Still the English general was not discouraged. His public spirit and patriotism prevailed over his just private resentment. Finding it impossible to prevail on the Dutch deputies, who, in every sense, were so many viceroys over him, to agree to any attempt to force the passage of the Dyle, he resolved to turn it. For this purpose the army was put in motion on the 14th August; and, defiling to his left, he directed it in three columns towards the sources of the Dyle. The march was rapid, as the Duke had information that strong reinforcements, detached from the army at Alsace, would join Villeroi on the 18th. They soon came to ground subsequently immortalized in English story. On the 16th they reached Genappe, where, on 17th June 1815, the Life-guards under Lord Anglesea defeated the French lancers; on the day following, the enemy retired into the forest of Soignies, still covering Brussels, and the Allied headquarters were moved to Braine la Leude. On the 17th August, a skirmish took place on the plain in front of Waterloo; and the alarm being given, the Duke hastened to the spot, and rode over the field where Wellington and Napoleon contended a hundred and ten years afterwards. The French upon this retired into the forest of Soignies, and rested at Waterloo for the night.

The slightest glance at the map must be sufficient to show, that by this cross march to Genappe and Waterloo, Marlborough had gained an immense advantage over the enemy. *He had interposed between them and France.* He had relinquished for the time, it is true, his own base of operations, and was out of

communication with his magazines; but he had provided for this by taking six days' provisions for the army with him; and he could now force the French to fight or abandon Brussels, and retire towards Antwerp – the Allies being between them and France. Still clinging to their fortified lines on the Dyle, and desirous of covering Brussels, they had only occupied the wood of Soignies with their right wing; while the Allies occupied all the open country from Genappe to Frischermont and Braine la Leude, with their advanced posts up to La Haye Sainte and Mount St John. The Allies now occupied the ground, afterwards covered by Napoleon's army: the forest of Soignies and approaches to Brussels were guarded by the French. Incalculable were the results of a victory gained in such a position: it was by success gained over an army of half the size, that Napoleon established his power in so surprising a manner at Marengo. Impressed with such ideas, Marlborough, on the 18th August, anxiously reconnoitred the ground; and finding the front practicable for the passage of troops, moved up his men in three columns to the attack. The artillery was sent to Wavre; the Allied columns traversed at right angles the line of march by which Blucher advanced to the support of Wellington on the 18th June 1815.

Had Marlborough's orders been executed, it is probable he would have gained a victory, which, from the relative position of the two armies, could not have been but decisive; and possibly the 18th August 1705, might have become as celebrated in history as the 18th June 1815. Overkirk, to whom he showed

the ground at Over-Ische which he had destined for an attack, perfectly concurred in the expedience of it, and orders were given to bring the artillery forward to commence a cannonade. By the malice or negligence of Slangenberg, who had again violated his express instructions, and permitted the baggage to intermingle with the artillery-train, the guns had not arrived, and some hours were lost before they could be pushed up. At length, at noon, the guns were brought forward, and the troops being in line, Marlborough rode along the front to give his last orders. The English and Germans were in the highest spirits, anticipating certain victory from the relative position of the armies; the French fighting with their faces to Paris, the Allies with theirs to Brussels. But again the Dutch deputies and generals interposed, alleging that the enemy was too strongly posted to be attacked with any prospect of success. "Gentlemen," said Marlborough to the circle of generals which surrounded him, "I have reconnoitred the ground, and made dispositions for an attack. I am convinced that conscientiously, and as men of honour, we cannot now retire without an action. Should we neglect this opportunity, we must be responsible before God and man. You see the confusion which pervades the ranks of the enemy, and their embarrassment at our manœuvres. I leave you to judge whether we should attack to-day, or wait till to-morrow. It is indeed late; but you must consider, that by throwing up intrenchments during the night, the enemy will render their position far more difficult to force." "Murder and massacre,"

replied Slangenberg. Marlborough, upon this, offered him two English for every Dutch battalion; but this too the Dutchman refused, on the plea that he did not understand English. Upon this the Duke offered to give him German regiments; but this too was declined, upon the pretence that the attack would be too hazardous. Marlborough, upon this, turned to the deputies and said – "I disdain to send troops to dangers which I will not myself encounter. I will lead them where the peril is most imminent. I adjure you, gentlemen! for the love of God and your country, do not let us neglect so favourable an opportunity." But it was all in vain; and instead of acting, the Dutch deputies and generals spent three hours in debating, until night came on and it was too late to attempt any thing. Such was Marlborough's chagrin at this disappointment, that he said, on retiring from the field, "I am at this moment *ten years* older than I was four days ago."

Next day, as Marlborough had foreseen, the enemy had strengthened their position with field-works; so that it was utterly hopeless to get the Dutch to agree to an attack which *then* would indeed have been hazardous, though it was not so the evening before. The case was now irremediable. The six days' bread he had taken with him was on the point of being exhausted, and a protracted campaign without communication with his magazines was impracticable. With a heavy heart, therefore, Marlborough remeasured his steps to the ground he had left in front of the Dyle, and gave orders for destroying the lines of Leau, which he had carried with so much ability. His vexation was increased

afterwards, by finding that the consternation of the French had been such on the 18th August, when he was so urgent to attack them, that they intended only to have made a show of resistance, in order to gain time for their baggage and heavy guns to retire to Brussels. To all appearance Marlborough, if he had not been so shamefully thwarted, would have illustrated the forest of Soignies by a victory as decisive as that of Blenheim, and realized the triumphant entrance to Brussels which Napoleon anticipated from his attack on Wellington on the same ground a hundred years afterwards.

Nothing further, of any moment, was done in this campaign, except the capture of Leau and levelling of the enemy's lines on the Gheet. Marlborough wrote a formal letter to the States, in which he regretted the opportunity which had been lost, which M. Overkirk had coincided with him in thinking promised a great and glorious victory; and he added, "my heart is so full that I cannot forbear representing to your High Mightinesses on this occasion, that I find my authority here to be much less than when I had the honour to command your troops in Germany."[8] The Dutch generals sent in their counter-memorial to their government, which contains a curious picture of their idea of the subordination and direction of an army, and furnishes a key to the jealousy which had proved so fatal to the common cause. They complained that the Duke of Marlborough, "without holding a council of war, made two or three marches *for the*

[8] Marlborough to the States, Wavre, 19th August 1705. *Desp*. II. 224.

execution of some design formed by his Grace; and we cannot conceal from your High Mightinesses that all the generals of our army think it very strange *that they should not have the least notice of the said marches*."[9] It has been already mentioned that Marlborough, like every other good general, kept his designs to himself, from the impossibility of otherwise keeping them from the enemy; and that he had the additional motive, in the case of the Dutch deputies and generals, of being desirous "to cheat them into victory."

Chagrined by disappointment, and fully convinced, as Wellington was after his campaign with Cuesta and the Spaniards at Talavera, that it was in vain to attempt any thing further with such impediments, on the part of the Allies, thrown in his way, Marlborough retired, in the beginning of September, to Tirlemont, the mineral waters of which had been recommended to him; and, in the end of October, the troops on both sides went into winter quarters. His vexation with the Dutch at this period strongly appeared in his private letters to his intimate friends;[10] but, though he exerted himself to the utmost during

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[9] Dutch Generals' Mem. *Coxe*, II. 174.

[10] "Several prisoners whom we have taken, as well as the deserters, assure us, that they should have made no other defence but such as might have given them time to draw off their army to Brussels, where their baggage was already gone. By this you may imagine how I am vexed, seeing very plainly I am joined with people who will never do any thing." —*Marlborough to Godolphin, August 24 1705*."M. Overkirk et moi avons d'abord été reconnaitre les postes que nous voulions attaquer, et l'armée étant rangée en bataille sur le midi, nous avions tout d'esperer, avec la benediction du ciel, vu notre supériorité, et la bonté des troupes, une heuruse journée; mais MM. les deputés de

the suspension of operations in the field, both by memorials to his own government, and representations to the Dutch rulers, to get the direction of the army put upon a better footing, yet he had magnanimity and patriotism enough to sacrifice his private feelings to the public good. Instead of striving, therefore, to inflame the resentment of the English cabinet at the conduct of the Dutch generals, he strove only to moderate it; and prevailed on them to suspend the sending of a formal remonstrance, which they had prepared, to the States-general, till the effect of his own private representation in that quarter was first ascertained. The result proved that he had judged wisely; his disinterested conduct met with the deserved reward. The Patriotic party, both in England and at the Hague, was strongly roused in his favour; the factious accusations of the English Tories, like those of the Whigs a century after against Wellington, were silenced; the States-general were compelled by the public indignation to withdraw from their commands the generals who had thwarted his measures; and, without risking the union of the two powers, the factious, selfish men who had endangered the object of their alliance, were for ever deprived of the means of doing mischief.

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l'état ayant voulu consulter leurs généraux, et les trouvant de differentes sentiments d'avec M. Overkirk et moi, ils n'ont pas voulu passer outre. De sorte que tout notre dessein, après l'avoir méné jusque là, a échoué, et nous avons rebroussé chemin pour aller commencer la démolition des Lignes, et prendre Leau. Vous pouvez bien croire, Monsieur, que je suis au désespoir d'être obligé d'essuyer encore ce contretemps; mais je vois bien qu'il ne faut pas plus songer à agir offensivement avec ces messieurs, puisqu' ils ne veulent rien risquer quand même ils ont tout l'advantage de leur côté." —*Marlborough au Comte de Wartenberg, Wavre, 20 Août 1705. Despatches*, II. 226.

But while the danger was thus abated in one quarter, it only became more serious in another. The Dutch had been protected, and hindered from breaking off from the alliance, only by endangering the fidelity of the Austrians; and it had now become indispensable, at all hazards, to do something to appease their jealousies. The Imperial cabinet, in addition to the war in Italy, on the Upper Rhine, and in the Low Countries, was now involved in serious hostilities in Hungary; and felt the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of maintaining the contest at once in so many different quarters. The cross march of Marlborough from the Moselle to Flanders, however loudly called for by the danger and necessities of the States, had been viewed with a jealous eye by the Emperor, as tending to lead the war away from the side of Lorraine, with which the German interests were wound up; and the instances were loud and frequent, that, now that the interests of the Dutch were sufficiently provided for, he should return with the English contingent to that, the proper theatre of offensive operations. But Marlborough's experience had taught him, that as little reliance was to be placed on the co-operation of the Margrave of Baden, and the lesser German powers, as on that of the Dutch; and he felt that it was altogether in vain to attempt another campaign either in Germany or Flanders, unless some more effectual measures were taken to appease the jealousies, and secure the co-operation of this discordant alliance, than had hitherto been done. With this view, after having arranged matters to his satisfaction at the Hague, when Slangenberg was removed

from the command, he repaired to Vienna in November, and thence soon after to Berlin.

Marlborough's extraordinary address and powers of persuasion did not desert him on this critical occasion. Never was more strongly exemplified the truth of Chesterfield's remark, that manner had as much weight as matter in procuring him success; and that he was elevated to greatness as much on the wings of the Graces as by the strength of Minerva. Great as were the difficulties which attended the holding together the grand alliance, they all yielded to the magic of his name and the fascination of his manner. At Bernsberg he succeeded in obtaining from the Elector a promise for the increase of his contingent, and leave for it to be sent into Italy, where its co-operation was required; at Frankfort he overcame, by persuasion and address, the difficulties of the Margrave of Baden; and at Vienna he was magnificently received, and soon obtained unbounded credit with the Emperor. He was raised to the rank of prince of the empire, with the most flattering assurances of esteem; and fêted by the nobles, who vied with each other in demonstrations of respect to the illustrious conqueror of Blenheim. During his short sojourn of a fortnight there, he succeeded in allaying the suspicions and quieting the apprehensions of the Emperor, which no other man could have done; and, having arranged the plan of the next campaign, and raised, on his own credit, a loan of 100,000 crowns for the imperial court from the bankers, as well as promised one of

L.250,000 more, which he afterwards obtained in London, he set out for Berlin, where his presence was not less necessary to stimulate the exertions and appease the complaints of the King of Prussia. He arrived there on the 30th November, and on the same evening had an audience of the King, to whose strange and capricious temper he so completely accommodated himself, that he allayed all his discontents, and brought him over completely to his views. He prevailed on him to renew the treaty for the furnishing of eight thousand men to aid the common cause, and to repair the chasms occasioned by the campaign in their ranks, as well as revoke the orders which had been issued for their return from Italy, where their removal would have proved of essential detriment. This concession, in the words of the prime minister who announced it, was granted "as a mark of respect to the Queen, and of particular friendship to the Duke." From Berlin he went, loaded with honours and presents, to Hanover, where jealousies of a different kind, but not less dangerous, had arisen in consequence of the apprehensions there entertained, that the Whigs were endeavouring to thwart the eventual succession of the House of Hanover to the throne of England. Marlborough's address, however, here also succeeded in overcoming all difficulties; and, after a sojourn of only a few days, he departed in the highest favour both with the Elector and his mother. From thence he hastened to the Hague, where he remained a fortnight, and succeeded in a great degree in removing those difficulties, and smoothing down those

jealousies, which had proved so injurious to the common cause in the preceding campaign. He prevailed on the Dutch to reject separate offers of accommodation, which had been made to them by the French government. Having thus put all things on as favourable a footing as could be hoped for on the Continent, he embarked for England in the beginning of January 1705 – having overcome greater difficulties, and obtained greater advantages, in the course of this winter campaign, with his divided allies, than he ever did during a summer campaign with the enemy.

Every one, how cursorily soever he may be acquainted with Wellington's campaigns, must be struck with the great similarity between the difficulties which thus beset the Duke of Marlborough, in the earlier periods of his career, and those which at a subsequent period so long hampered the genius and thwarted the efforts of England's greatest general. Slangenberg's jealousy as an exact counterpart of that of Cuesta at Talavera; the timidity of the Dutch authorities was precisely similar to that of the Portuguese regency; the difficulty of appeasing the jealousy of Austria and Prussia, identical with that which so often compelled Wellington to hurry from the field to Lisbon and Cadiz. Such is the selfishness of human nature that it seems impossible to get men, actuated by different interests, to concur in any measures for the general good but under the pressure of immediate danger, so threatening as to be obvious to every understanding, or by the influence of ability and address of the very highest order. It is this which in every age has caused the weakness of the best-

cemented confederacies, and so often enabled single powers, not possessing a fourth part of their material resources, to triumph over them. And it is in the power of overcoming these difficulties, and allaying those jealousies, that one of the most important qualities of the general of an alliance is to be found.

Marlborough sailed for the Continent, to take the command of the armies in the Low Countries, on the 20th April 1706. His design was to have transferred the seat of war into Italy, as affairs had become so unpromising in that quarter as to be well-nigh desperate. The Imperialists had been surprised by the French general, Vendôme, in their quarters near Como, and driven into the mountains behind that town with the loss of three thousand men; so that all hold of the plain of Lombardy was lost. The Duke of Savoy was even threatened with a siege in his capital of Turin. The Margrave of Baden was displaying his usual fractious and impracticable disposition on the Upper Rhine: it seemed, in Marlborough's words, "as if he had no other object in view but to cover his own capital and residence." In Flanders, the habitual procrastination and tardiness of the Dutch had so thrown back the preparations, that it was impossible to begin the campaign so early as he had intended; and the jealousies of the cabinets of Berlin and Copenhagen had again revived to such a degree, that no aid was to be expected either from the Prussian or Danish contingents. It was chiefly to get beyond the reach of such troublesome and inconstant neighbours, that Marlborough was so desirous of transferring the seat of

war to Italy, where he would have been beyond their reach. But all his efforts failed in inducing the States-general to allow any part of their troops to be employed to the south of the Alps; nor, indeed, could it reasonably have been expected that they would consent to hazard their forces, in an expedition not immediately connected with their interests, to so distant a quarter. The umbrage of the Elector of Hanover at the conduct of Queen Anne, had become so excessive, that he positively refused to let his contingent march. The Danes and Hessians excused themselves on various pretences from moving their troops to the south; and the Emperor, instead of contributing any thing to the war in Flanders, was urgent that succour should be sent, and that the English general should, in person, take the command on the Moselle. Marlborough was thus reduced to the English troops, and those in the pay of Holland; but they amounted to nearly sixty thousand men; and, on the 19th May, he set out from the Hague to take the command of this force, which lay in front of the old French frontier on the river Dyle. Marshal Villeroi had there collected sixty-two thousand men; so that the two armies, in point of numerical strength, were very nearly equal.

The English general had established a secret correspondence with one Pasquini, an inhabitant of Namur, through whose agency, and that of some other citizens of the town who were inclined to the Imperial interest, he hoped to be able to make himself master of that important fortress. To facilitate that attempt, and have troops at hand ready to take advantage of

any opening that might be afforded them in that quarter, he moved towards Tirlemont, directing his march by the sources of the Little Gheet. Determined to cover Namur, and knowing that the Hanoverians and Hessians were absent, Villeroi marched out of his lines, in order to stop the advance of the Allies, and give battle in the open field. On the 20th May, the English and Dutch forces effected their junction at Bitsia; and on the day following the Danish contingent arrived, Marlborough having by great exertions persuaded them to come up from the Rhine, upon receiving a guarantee for their pay from the Dutch government. This raised his force to seventy-three battalions and one hundred and twenty-four squadrons. The French had seventy-four battalions and one hundred and twenty-eight squadrons; but they had a much greater advantage in the homogeneous quality of their troops, who were all of one country; while the forces of the confederates were drawn from three different nations, speaking different languages, and many of whom had never acted in the field together. Cadogan, with six hundred horse, formed the vanguard of Marlborough's army; and at daybreak on the 22d, he beheld the enemy's army grouped in dense masses in the strong camp of Mont St André. As their position stretched directly across the allied line of march, a battle was unavoidable; and Marlborough no sooner was informed of it, than with a joyous heart he prepared for the conflict.

The ground occupied by the enemy, and which has become so famous by the battle of Ramilies which followed, was on

the summit of an elevated plateau forming the highest ground in Brabant, immediately above the two sources of the Little Gheet. The plateau above them is varied by gentle undulations, interspersed with garden grounds, and dotted with coppice woods. From it the two Gheets, the Mehaigne and the Dyle, take their source, and flow in different directions, so that it is the most elevated ground in the whole country. The descents from the summit of the plateau to the Great Gheet are steep and abrupt; but the other rivers rise in marshes and mosses, which are very wet, and in some places impassable. Marlborough was well aware of the strength of the position on the summit of this eminence, and he had used all the dispatch in his power to reach it before the enemy; but Villeroi had less ground to go over, and had his troops in battle array on the summit before the English appeared in sight. The position which they occupied ran along the front of a curve facing inwards, and overhanging the sources of the Little Gheet. Their troops extended along the crest of the ridge above the marshes, having the village of Autre Eglise in its front on the extreme left, the villages of Offuz and Ramilies in its front, and its extreme right on the high grounds which overhung the course of the Mehaigne, and the old *chaussée* of Brunehand which ran near and parallel to its banks. Their right stretched to the Mehaigne, on which it rested, and the village of Tavieres on its banks was strongly occupied by foot-soldiers. The French foot were drawn up in two lines, with the villages in their front strongly occupied by infantry. In

Ramilies alone twenty battalions were posted. The great bulk of their horse was arranged also in two lines on the right, across the chaussée of Brunehand, by which part of the Allied column was to advance. On the highest point of the ridge occupied by the French, and in the rear of their extreme right, commanding the whole field of battle, behind the mass of cavalry, was the tomb or barrow of Ottomond, a German hero of renown in ancient days, which it was evident would become the subject of a desperate strife between the contending parties in the conflict which was approaching.

Marlborough no sooner came in sight of the enemy's position than he formed his own plan of attack. His troops were divided into ten columns; the cavalry being into two lines on each wing, the infantry in six columns in the centre. He at once saw that the French right, surmounted by the lofty plateau on which the tomb of Ottomond was placed, was the key of the position, and against that he resolved to direct the weight of his onset; but the better to conceal his real design, he determined to make a vehement false attack on the village of Autre Eglise and the French left. The nature of the ground occupied by the allies and enemy respectively, favoured this design; for the French were posted round the circumference of a segment, while the allies occupied the centre and chord, so that they could move with greater rapidity than their opponents from one part of the field to another. Marlborough's stratagem was entirely successful. He formed, in the first instance, with some ostentation, a weighty

column of attack opposite to the French left, menacing the village of Autre Eglise. No sooner did Villeroi perceive this than he drew a considerable body of infantry from his centre behind Offuz, and marched them with the utmost expedition to reinforce the threatened point on his left. When Marlborough saw this cross-movement fairly commenced, skilfully availing himself of a rising ground on which the front of his column of attack on his right was placed, he directed the second line and columns in support when the front had reached the edge of the plateau, where they obstructed the view of those behind them, to halt in a hollow where they could not be seen, and immediately after, still concealed from the enemy's sight, to defile rapidly to the left till they came into the rear of the left centre. The Danish horse, twenty squadrons strong, under the Duke of Wirtemberg, were at the same time placed in a third line behind the cavalry of the left wing, so as to bring the weight of his horse as well as foot into that quarter.

At half past twelve the cannonade began on both sides, and that of the French played heavily on the columns of the confederates advancing to the attack. The Allied right wing directed against Autre Eglise, steadily advanced up the slopes from the banks of the Little Gheet to the edge of the plateau; but there they halted, deployed into line, and opened their fire in such a position as to conceal entirely the transfer of the infantry and cavalry in their rear to the Allied left. No sooner had they reached it, than the attack began in real earnest, and with a preponderating

force in that direction. Colonel Wertonville, with four Dutch battalions, advanced against Tavieres, while twelve battalions in columns of companies, supported by a strong reserve, began the attack on Ramilies in the left centre. The vehemence of this assault soon convinced Villeroi that the real attack of the Allies was in that quarter; but he had no reserve of foot to support the troops in the villages, every disposable man having been sent off to the left in the direction of Autre Eglise. In this dilemma, he hastily ordered fourteen squadrons of horse to dismount, and, supported by two Swiss battalions, moved them up to the support of the troops in Tavieres. Before they could arrive, however, the Dutch battalions had with great gallantry carried that village; and Marlborough, directing the Danish horse, under the brave Duke of Wirtemberg, against the flank of the dismounted dragoons, as they were in column and marching up, speedily cut them in pieces, and hurled back the Swiss in confusion on the French horse, who were advancing to their support.

Following up his success, Overkirk next charged the first line of advancing French cavalry with the first line of the Allied horse, and such was the vigour of his onset, that the enemy were broken and thrown back. But the second line of French and Bavarian horse soon came up, and assailing Overkirk's men when they were disordered by success, and little expecting another struggle, overthrew them without difficulty, drove them back in great confusion, and almost entirely restored the battle in that quarter. The danger was imminent that the victorious

French horse, having cleared the open ground of their opponents, would wheel about and attack in rear the twelve battalions who were warmly engaged with the attack on Ramilies. Marlborough instantly saw the danger, and putting himself at the head of seventeen squadrons at hand, himself led them on to stop the progress of the victorious horse; while, at the same time, he sent orders for every disposable sabre to come up from his right with the utmost expedition. The moment was critical, and nothing but the admirable intrepidity and presence of mind of the English general retrieved the Allied affairs. Leading on the reserve of the Allied horse with his wonted gallantry, under a dreadful fire from the French batteries on the heights behind Ramilies, he was recognised by some French troopers, with whom he had formerly served in the time of Charles II., who made a sudden rush at him. They had well-nigh made him prisoner, for they succeeded in surrounding the Duke before his men could come up to the rescue, and he only extricated himself from the throng of assailants by fighting his way out, like the knights of old, sword in hand. He next tried to leap a ditch, but his horse fell in the attempt; and when mounting another horse, given him by his aide-de-camp Captain Molesworth, Colonel Bingfield, his equery, who held the stirrup, had his head carried off by a cannon ball. The imminent danger of their beloved general, however, revived the spirit of his troops, whom the dreadful severity of the cannonade had, during the scuffle, thrown into disorder; and, re-forming with great celerity, they again returned with desperate

resolution to the charge.

At this critical moment, when nothing was as yet decided, the twenty fresh squadrons whom Marlborough had so opportunely called up from the Allied right, were seen galloping at full speed, but still in regular order, on the plain behind this desperate conflict. Halting directly in rear of the spot where the horse on both sides were so vehemently engaged, they wheeled into line, and advanced, in close order and admirable array, to the support of the Duke. Encouraged by this powerful reinforcement, the whole Allied cavalry re-formed, and crowded forward in three lines, with loud shouts, to the attack of the now intimidated and disheartened French. They no longer withstood the onset, but, turning their horses' heads, fled with precipitation. The low grounds between Ramilies and the old chaussée were quickly passed, and the victorious horse, pressing up the slope on the opposite side, erelong reached the summit of the plateau. The tomb of Ottomond, its highest point, and visible from the whole field of battle, was soon seen resplendent with sabres and cuirasses, amidst a throng of horse; and deafening shouts, heard over the whole extent of both armies, announced that the crowning point and key of the whole position was carried.

But Villeroi was an able and determined general, and his soldiers fought with the inherent bravery of the French nation. The contest, thus virtually decided, was not yet over. A fierce fight was raging around Ramilies, where the garrison of twenty French battalions opposed a stout resistance to Schultz's

grenadiers. By degrees, however, the latter gained ground; two Swiss battalions, which had long and resolutely held their ground, were at length forced back into the village, and some of the nearest houses fell into the hands of the Allies. Upon this the whole rushed forward, and drove the enemy in a mass out of it towards the high grounds in their rear. The Marquis Maffei, however, rallied two regiments of Cologne guards, in a hollow way leading up from the village to the plateau, and opposed so vigorous a resistance that he not only checked the pursuit but regained part of the village. But Marlborough, whose eye was every where, no sooner saw this than he ordered up twenty battalions in reserve behind the centre, and they speedily cleared the village; and Maffei, with his gallant troops, being charged in flank by the victorious horse at the very time that he was driven out of the village by the infantry, was made prisoner, and almost all his men taken or destroyed.

The victory was now decided on the British left and centre, where alone the real attack had been made. But so vehement had been the onset, so desperate the passage of arms which had taken place, that though the battle had lasted little more than three hours, the victors were nearly in as great disorder as the vanquished. Horse, foot, and artillery, were blended together in wild confusion; especially between Ramilies and the Mehaigne, and thence up to the tomb of Ottomond, in consequence of the various charges of all arms which had so rapidly succeeded each other on the same narrow space. Marlborough, seeing this, halted

his troops, before hazarding any thing further, on the ground where they stood, which, in the left and centre, was where the enemy had been at the commencement of the action. Villeroi skilfully availed himself of this breathing-time to endeavour to re-form his broken troops, and take up a new line from Geest-a-Gerompont, on his right, through Offuz to Autre Eglise, still held by its original garrison, on his left. But in making the retrograde movement so as to get his men into this oblique position, he was even more impeded and thrown into disorder by the baggage waggons and dismounted guns on the heights, than the Allies had been in the plain below. Marlborough seeing this, resolved to give the enemy no time to rally, but again sounding the charge, ordered infantry and cavalry to advance. A strong column passed the morass in which the Little Gheet takes its rise, directing their steps towards Offuz; but the enemy, panic-struck as at Waterloo, by the general advance of the victors, gave way on all sides. Offuz was abandoned without firing a shot; the cavalry pursued with headlong fury, and soon the plateau of Mont St André was covered with a mass of fugitives. The troops in observation on the right, seeing the victory gained on the left and centre, of their own accord joined in the pursuit, and soon made themselves masters of Autre Eglise and the heights behind it. The Spanish and Bavarian horse-guards made a gallant attempt to stem the flood of disaster, but without attaining their object; it only led to their own destruction. Charged by General Wood and Colonel Wyndham at the head of the English horse-

guards, they were cut to pieces. The rout now became universal, and all resistance ceased. In frightful confusion, a disorganized mass of horse and foot, abandoning their guns, streamed over the plateau, poured headlong down the banks of the Great Gheet, on the other side, and fled towards Louvain, which they reached in the most dreadful disorder at two o'clock in the morning. The British horse, under Lord Orkney, did not draw bridle from the pursuit till they reached the neighbourhood of that fortress; having, besides fighting the battle, marched full five-and-twenty miles that day. Marlborough halted for the night, and established headquarters at Mildert, thirteen miles from the field of battle, and five from Louvain.

The trophies of the battle of Ramilies were immense; but they were even exceeded by its results. The loss of the French in killed and wounded was 7000 men, and, in addition to that, 6000 prisoners were taken. With the desertion in the days after the battle, they were weakened by full 15,000 men. They lost fifty-two guns, their whole baggage and pontoon train, all their caissons, and eighty standards wrested from them in fair fight. Among the prisoners were the Princes de Soubise and Rohan, and a son of Marshal Tallard. The victors lost 1066 killed, and 2567 wounded, in all, 3633. The great and unusual proportion of killed to the wounded, shows how desperate and hand to hand, as in ancient battles, the fighting had been. Overkirk nobly supported the Duke in this action, and not only repeatedly charged at the head of his horse, but continued on horseback in

the pursuit till one in the morning, when he narrowly escaped death from a Bavarian officer whom he had made prisoner, and given back his sword, saying, "You are a gentleman, and may keep it." The base wretch no sooner got it into his hand than he made a lounge at the Dutch general, but fortunately missed his blow, and was immediately cut down for his treachery by Overkirk's orderly.

The immediate result of this splendid victory, was the acquisition of nearly all Austrian Flanders – Brussels, Louvain, Mechlin, Alort, Luise, and nearly all the great towns of Brabant, opened their gates immediately after. Ghent and Bruges speedily followed the example; and Daun and Oudenarde also soon declared for the Austrian cause. Of all the towns in Flanders, Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, and Dunkirk alone held out for the French; and to their reduction the Duke immediately turned his attention. The public transports in Holland knew no bounds; they much exceeded what had been felt for the victory of Blenheim, for that only saved Germany, but this delivered themselves. The wretched jealousy which had so long thwarted the Duke, as it does every other really great man, was fairly overpowered in "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." In England, the rejoicings were equally enthusiastic, and a solemn thanksgiving, at which the Queen attended in person at St Paul's, gave a willing vent to the general thankfulness. "Faction and the French," as Bolingbroke expressed it, [11] were all that Marlborough had

[11] "This vast addition of renown which your Grace has acquired, and the wonderful

to fear, and he had fairly conquered both. But the snake was scotched, not killed, and he replenished his venom, and prepared future stings even during the roar of triumphant cannon, and the festive blaze of rejoicing cities.[12]

The French army, after this terrible defeat, retired in the deepest dejection towards French Flanders, leaving garrisons in the principal fortresses which still held out for them. Marlborough made his triumphant entry into Brussels in great pomp on the 28th May, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The Three Estates of Brabant assembled there, acknowledged Charles III. for their sovereign, and received, in return, a guarantee from the English government and the States-general, that the *joyeuse entrée*, the Magna Charta of Flanders, should be faithfully observed. "Every where, says Marlborough, the joy was great at being delivered from the insolence and exactions of the French." The victory of Ramilies produced no less effect on the northern courts, where jealousies and

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preservation of your life, are subjects upon which I can never express a thousandth part of what I feel. *France and faction are the only enemies England has to fear*, and your Grace will conquer both; at least, while you beat the French, you give a strength to the Government which the other dares not contend with." —*Bolingbroke to Marlborough, May 28, 1706. Coxe*, II. 358.

[12] "I shall attend the Queen at the thanksgiving on Thursday next: I assure you I shall do it, from every vein within me, having scarce any thing else to support either my head or heart. The *animosity and inveteracy one has to struggle against is unimaginable*, not to mention the difficulty of obtaining things to be done that are reasonable, or of satisfying people with reason when they are done." —*Godolphin to Marlborough, May 24, 1706.*

lukewarmness had hitherto proved so pernicious to the common cause. The King of Prussia, who had hitherto kept aloof, and suspended the march of his troops, now on the mediation of Marlborough became reconciled to the Emperor and the States-general; and the Elector of Hanover, forgetting his apprehensions about the English succession, was among the foremost to offer his congratulations, and make a tender of his forces to the now triumphant cause. It is seldom that the prosperous want friends.

The Dutch were clear, after the submission of Brabant, to levy contributions in it as a conquered country, to relieve themselves of part of the expenses of the war; and Godolphin, actuated by the same short-sighted views, was eager to replenish the English exchequer from the same source. But Marlborough, like Wellington in after days, had magnanimity and wisdom enough to see the folly, as well as injustice, of thus alienating infant allies at the moment of their conversion, and he combated the project so successfully, that it was abandoned.[13] At the same time, he preserved the strictest discipline on the part of his troops, and took every imaginable precaution to secure the affections and allay the apprehensions of the inhabitants of the ceded provinces. The good effects of this wise and conciliatory policy were soon apparent. Without firing a shot, the Allies gained greater advantages during the remainder of the campaign, than they could have done by a series of bloody sieges, and the sacrifice of thirty thousand men. Nor was it less advantageous to

[13] Duke of Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley, June 14, 1706.

the English general than to the common cause; for it delivered him, for that season at least, from the thraldom of a council of war, the invariable resource of a weak, and bane of a lofty mind.[14]

The Estates of Brabant, assembled at Brussels, sent injunctions to the governor of Antwerp, Ghent, and all the other fortresses within their territories, to declare for Charles III., and admit these troops. The effects of this, coupled with the discipline preserved by the Allied troops, and the protection from contributions, was incredible. No sooner were the orders from the States at Brussels received at Antwerp, than a schism broke out between the French regiments in the garrison and the Walloon guards, the latter declaring for Charles III. The approach of Marlborough's army, and the intelligence of the submission of the other cities of Brabant, brought matters to a crisis; and after some altercation, it was agreed that the French troops should march out with the honours of war, and be escorted to Bouchain, within the frontier of their own country. On the 6th June this magnificent fortress, which it had cost the Prince of Parma so vast an expenditure of blood and treasure to reduce, and which Napoleon said was itself worth a kingdom, was gained without firing a shot. Oudenarde, which had been in vain

[14] "The consequences of this battle are likely to be greater than that of Blenheim; for we have now the whole summer before us, and, with the blessing of God, I will make the best use of it. *For as I have had no council of war before this battle, so I hope to have none during the whole campaign;* and I think we may make such work of it as may give the Queen the glory of making a safe and honourable peace, for the blessing of God is certainly with us." —*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin, May 27, 1706. Coxe, II. 365.*

besieged in the last war by William III. at the head of sixty thousand men, at the same time followed the example; and Ghent and Bruges opened their gates. Flanders, bristling with fortresses, and the possession of which in the early part of the war had been of such signal service to the French, was, with the exception of Ostend, Dunkirk, and two or three smaller places, entirely gained by the consternation produced by a single battle. Well might Marlborough say, "the consequences of our victory are almost incredible. A whole country, with so many strong places, delivered up without the least resistance, shows, not only the great loss they must have sustained, but likewise the terror and consternation they are in."[15]

At this period, Marlborough hoped the war would be speedily brought to a close, and that a glorious peace would reward his own and his country's efforts. His thoughts reverted constantly, as his private correspondence shows, to home, quiet, and domestic happiness. To the Duchess he wrote at this period – "You are very kind in desiring I would not expose myself. Be assured, I love you so well, and am so desirous of ending my days quietly with you, that I shall not venture myself but when it is absolutely necessary; and I am sure you are so kind to me, and wish so well to the common cause, that you had rather see me dead than not do my duty. I am persuaded that this campaign will bring in a good peace; and I beg of you to do all that you can, that the house of Woodstock may be carried up as much as possible, that I may

[15] Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley, 3d June 1706. *Desp. II.* 554.

have the prospect of living in it."[16]– But these anticipations were not destined to be realized; and before he retired into the vale of years, the hero was destined to drain to the dregs the cup of envy, jealousy, and ingratitude.

His first step of importance, after consolidating the important conquests he had made, and averting the cupidity of the Dutch, which, by levying contributions on their inhabitants, threatened to endanger them before they were well secured, was to undertake the siege of Ostend, the most considerable place in Flanders, which still held out for the French interest. This place, celebrated for its great strength, and the long siege of three years which it had withstood against the Spanish under Spinola, was expected to make a very protracted resistance; but such was the terror now inspired by Marlborough's name, that it was reduced much sooner than had been anticipated. Every preparation had been made for a protracted resistance. A fleet of nine ships of the line lay off the harbour, and a formidable besieging train was brought up from Antwerp and Brussels. Trenches were opened on the 28th June; the counterscarp was blown in on the 6th July; and the day following, the besieged, after a fruitless sally, capitulated, and the Flemish part of the garrison entered the service of the Allies. The garrison was still five thousand strong, when it surrendered; two ships of the line were taken in the harbour; and the total loss of the besiegers was only five hundred men.

[16] Marlborough to Duchess of Marlborough, May 31, 1706.

Menin was next besieged, but it made a more protracted resistance. Its great strength was derived from the means which the governor of the fortress possessed of flooding at will the immense low plains in which it is situated. Its fortifications had always been considered as one of the masterpieces of Vauban; the garrison was ample; and the governor a man of resolution, who was encouraged to make a vigorous resistance, by the assurances of succour which he had received from the French government. In effect, Louis XIV. had made the greatest efforts to repair the consequences of the disaster at Ramilies. Marshal Marsin had been detached from the Rhine with eighteen battalions and fourteen squadrons; and, in addition to that, thirty battalions and forty squadrons were marching from Alsace. These great reinforcements, with the addition of nine battalions which were in the lines on the Dyle when the battle of Ramilies was fought, would, when all assembled, have raised the French army to one hundred and ten battalions, and one hundred and forty squadrons – or above one hundred thousand men; whereas Marlborough, after employing thirty-two battalions in the siege, could only spare for the covering army about seventy-two battalions and eighty squadrons. The numerical superiority, therefore, was very great on the side of the enemy, especially when the Allies were divided by the necessity of carrying on the siege; and Villeroi, who had lost the confidence of his men, had been replaced by the Duke de Vendôme, one of the best generals in the French service, illustrated by his recent victory over the Imperialists in Italy. He

loudly gave out that he would raise the siege, and approached the covering army closely, as if with that design. But Marlborough persevered in his design; for, to use his own words, "The Elector of Bavaria says, he is promised a hundred and ten battalions, and they are certainly stronger in horse than we. But even if they had greater numbers, I neither think it is their interest nor their inclination to venture a battle; for our men are in heart, and theirs are cowed."[17]

Considerable difficulties were experienced in the first instance in getting up the siege equipage, in consequence of the inundations which were let loose; but a drought having set in, when the blockade began, in the beginning of August, these obstacles were erelong overcome, and on the 9th August the besiegers' fire began, while Marlborough took post at Helchin to cover the siege. On the 18th, the fire of the breaching batteries had been so effectual, that it was deemed practicable to make an assault on the covered way. As a determined resistance was anticipated, the Duke repaired to the spot to superintend the attack. At seven in the evening, the signal was given by the explosion of two mines, and the troops, the English in front, rushed to the assault. They soon cut down the palisades, and, throwing their grenades before them, erelong got into the covered way; but there they were exposed to a dreadful fire from two ravelins which enfiladed it. For two hours they bore it without flinching, labouring hard to erect barricades, so as to get

[17] Marlborough to Secretary Harley, Helchin, 9th August 1706. *Desp*. III. 69.

under cover; which was at length done, but not before fourteen hundred of the brave assailants had been struck down. This success, though thus dearly purchased, was however decisive. The establishment of the besiegers in this important lodgement, in the heart as it were of their works, so distressed the enemy, that on the 22d they hoisted the white flag, and capitulated, still 4300 strong, on the following day. The reduction of this strong and celebrated fortress gave the most unbounded satisfaction to the Allies, as it not only materially strengthened the barrier against France; but having taken place in presence of the Duke de Vendôme and his powerful army, drawn together with such diligence to raise the siege, it afforded the strongest proof of the superiority they had now acquired over their enemy in the field.[18]

Upon the fall of Menin, Vendôme collected his troops, and occupied a position behind the Lys and the Dyle, in order to cover Lille, against which he supposed the intentions of Marlborough were directed. But he had another object in view, and immediately sat down before Dendermonde, still keeping post with his covering army at Helchin, which barred the access to that fortress. Being situated on the banks of the Scheldt, it was so completely within the power of the governor to hinder the approaches of the besiegers, by letting out the waters, that the King of France said, on hearing they had commenced its siege – "They must have an army of ducks to take it." An extraordinary drought at this period, however, which lasted seven

[18] Marlborough to Duke of Savoy, Helchin, 25th August 1706. *Desp*. III. 101.

weeks, had so lowered the Scheldt and canals, that the approaches were pushed with great celerity, and on the 5th September the garrison surrendered at discretion. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin on this occasion – "The taking of Dendermonde, making the garrison prisoners of war, was more than could have been expected; but I saw they were in a consternation. That place could never have been taken but by the hand of God, which gave us seven weeks without rain. The rain began the day after we had taken possession, and continued without intermission for the three next days."[19]

Ath was the next object of attack. This small but strong fortress is of great importance, as lying on the direct road from Mons to Brussels by Halle; and, in consequence of that circumstance, it was rendered a fortress of the first order, when the barrier of strongholds, insanely demolished by Joseph II. before the war of the Revolution, was restored by the Allies, under the direction of Wellington, after its termination. Marlborough entrusted the direction of the attack to Overkirk, while he himself occupied, with the covering army, the position of Leuze. Vendôme's army was so much discouraged that he did not venture to disturb the operations; but retiring behind the Scheldt, between Condé and Montagne, contented himself with throwing strong garrisons into Mons and Charleroi, which he apprehended would be the next object of attack. The operations of the besiegers against Ath were pushed with great vigour; and

[19] Marlborough to Godolphin, September 4, 1706. *Coxe*, III. 10.

on the 4th October the garrison, eight hundred strong, all that remained out of two thousand who manned the works when the siege began, surrendered prisoners of war. Marlborough was very urgent after this success to undertake the siege of Mons, which would have completed the conquest of Brabant and Flanders; but he could not persuade the Dutch authorities to furnish him with the requisite stores to undertake it.[20] After a parade of his army in the open field near Cambron, in the hope of drawing Vendôme, who boasted of having one hundred and forty battalions and one hundred and eighty squadrons at his command, to a battle, in which he was disappointed, he resigned the command to Overkirk, put the army into winter quarters, and hastened to Brussels, to commence his arduous duties of stilling the jealousies and holding together the discordant powers of the alliance.[21]

Marlborough was received in the most splendid manner,

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[20] "If the Dutch can furnish ammunition for the siege of Mons, we shall undertake it; for if the weather continues fair, we shall have it much cheaper this year than the next, when they have had time to recruit their army. The taking of that town would be a very great advantage to us for the opening of next campaign, which we must make if we would bring France to such a peace as will give us quiet hereafter." —*Marlborough to Godolphin, October 14, 1706. Coxe*, III. 14.

[21] "M. de Vendôme tells his officers he has one hundred and forty battalions and one hundred and eighty squadrons, and that, if my Lord Marlborough gives him an opportunity, he will pay him a visit before this campaign ends. I believe he has neither will nor power to do it, which we shall see quickly, for we are now camped in so open a country that if he marches to us we cannot refuse fighting." —*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin, October 14, 1706. Ibid.*

and with unbounded demonstrations of joy, at Brussels, not only by the inconstant populace, but by the deputies of the Three Estates of Brabant, which were there assembled in regular and permanent sovereignty. Well might they lavish their demonstrations of respect and gratitude on the English general; for never in modern times had more important or glorious events signalized a successful campaign. In five months the power of France had been so completely broken, and the towering temper of its inhabitants so lowered, that their best general, at the head of above a hundred thousand men, did not venture to measure swords with the Allies, not more than two-thirds of their numerical strength in the field. By the effects of a single victory, the whole of Brabant and Flanders, studded with the strongest fortresses in Europe, each of which, in former wars, had required months – some, years – for their reduction, had been gained to the Allied arms. Between those taken on the field of Ramilies, and subsequently in the besieged fortresses, above twenty thousand men had been made prisoners, and twice that number lost to the enemy by the sword, sickness, and desertion; and France now made head against the Allies in Flanders only by drawing together their forces from all other quarters, and starving the war in Italy and on the Rhine, as well as straining every nerve in the interior. This state of almost frenzied exertion could not last. Already the effects of Marlborough's triumph at the commencement of the campaign had appeared, in the total defeat of the French in their lines before Turin, by Prince

Eugene, on the 18th September, and their expulsion from Italy. It was the reinforcements procured for him, and withheld from his opponents, by Marlborough, which obtained for him this glorious victory, at which the English general, with the generosity of true greatness, rejoiced even more sincerely than he had done in any triumphs of his own;[22] while Eugene, with equal greatness of mind, was the first to ascribe his success mainly to the succours sent him by the Duke of Marlborough.[23]

But all men are not Marlboroughs or Eugenes: the really great alone can witness success without envy, or achieve it without selfishness. In the base herd of ignoble men who profited by the efforts of these great leaders, the malignant passions were rapidly gaining strength by the very magnitude of their triumphs. The removal of danger was producing its usual effect, among the Allies, of reviving jealousy. Conquest was spreading its invariable discord in the cupidity to share its fruits. These divisions had early appeared after the battle of Ramilies, when

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[22] "I have now received confirmation of the success in Italy, from the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene, and it is impossible for me to express the joy it has given me; *for I not only esteem, but really love, that Prince*. This glorious action must bring France so low, that if our friends can be persuaded to carry on the war one year longer with vigour, we could not fail, with God's blessing, to have such a peace as would give us quiet in our days. But the Dutch are at this time unaccountable." —*Marlborough to the Duchess, Sept. 26, 1706. Coxe*, III. 20, 21.

[23] "Your highness, I am sure, will rejoice at the signal advantage which the arms of his Imperial Majesty and the Allies have gained. *You have had so great a hand in it, by the succours you have procured*, that you must permit me to thank you again." —*Eugene to Marlborough, 20th Sept. 1706. Coxe*, III. 20.

the Emperor Joseph, as a natural mark of gratitude to the general who had delivered his people from their oppressors, as well as from a regard to his own interests, appointed Marlborough to the general command as viceroy of the Netherlands. The English general was highly gratified by this mark of confidence and gratitude; and the appointment was cordially approved of by Queen Anne and the English cabinet, who without hesitation authorized Marlborough to accept the proffered dignity. But the Dutch, who had already begun to conceive projects of ambition by an accession of territory to themselves on the side of Flanders, evinced such umbrage at this appointment, as tending to throw the administration of the Netherlands entirely into the hands of the English and Austrians, that Marlborough had the magnanimity to solicit permission to decline an honour which threatened to breed disunion in the alliance.[24] This conduct was as disinterested as it was patriotic; for the appointments of the government, thus declined from a desire for the public good,

[24] "This appointment by the Emperor has given some uneasiness in Holland, by thinking that the Emperor has a mind to put the power in this country into the Queen's hands, in order that they may have nothing to do with it. If I should find the same thing by the Pensionary, and that nothing can cure this jealousy but my desiring to be excused from accepting this commission, I hope the Queen will allow of it; for the advantage and honour I have by this commission is *very insignificant in comparison of the fatal consequences that might be if it should cause a jealousy between the two nations*. And though the appointments of this government are sixty thousand pounds a-year, I shall with pleasure excuse myself, since I am convinced it is for her service, if the States should not make it their request, which they are very far from doing." —*Marlborough to Godolphin, July 1 and 8, 1706. Coxe*, III. 391, 393.

were no less than sixty thousand pounds a-year.

Although, however, Marlborough thus renounced this splendid appointment, yet the court of Vienna were not equally tractable, and evinced the utmost jealousy at the no longer disguised desire of the Dutch to gain an accession of territory, and the barrier of which they were so passionately desirous, at the expense of the Austrian Netherlands. The project also got wind, and the inhabitants of Brabant, whom difference of religion and old-established national rivalry had long alienated from the Dutch, were so much alarmed at the prospect of being transferred to their hated neighbours, that it at once cooled their ardour in the cause of the alliance, and went far to sow the seeds of irrepressible dissension among them. The Emperor, therefore, again pressed the appointment on Marlborough; but from the same lofty motives he continued to decline, professing a willingness, at the same time, to give the Emperor every aid privately in the new government which was in his power; so that the Emperor was obliged to give a reluctant consent. Notwithstanding this refusal, the jealousy of the Dutch was such, that on the revival of a report that the government had been again confirmed to the Duke of Marlborough, they were thrown into such a ferment, that in the public congress the Pensionary could not avoid exclaiming in the presence of the English ambassador, "Mon Dieu! est-il possible qu'on voudrait faire ce pas sans notre participation?"[25]

[25] Mr Stepney to Duke of Marlborough, *Hague, Jan. 4, 1707. Coxe*, II. 407.

The French government were soon informed of this jealousy, and of the open desire of the Dutch for an accession of territory on the side of Flanders, at the expense of Austria; and they took advantage of it, early in the summer of 1706, to open a secret negotiation with the States-general for the conclusion of a separate peace with that republic. The basis of this accommodation was to be a renunciation by the Duke of Anjou of his claim to the crown of Spain, upon receiving an equivalent in Italy: he offered to recognize Anne as Queen of England, and professed the utmost readiness to secure for the Dutch, *at the expense of Austria*, that barrier in the Netherlands, to which he conceived them to be so well entitled. These proposals elated the Dutch government to such a degree, that they began to take a high hand, and assume a dictatorial tone at the Hague: and it was the secret belief that they would, if matters came to extremities, be supported by France in this exorbitant demand for a slice of Austria, that made them resist so strenuously the government of the Low Countries being placed in such firm and vigorous hands as those of Marlborough. Matters had come to such a pass in October and November 1706, that Godolphin regarded affairs as desperate, and thought the alliance was on the point of being dissolved.[26] Thus was Marlborough's usual winter campaign with

[26] "Lord Somers has shown me a long letter which he has had from the Pensionary, very intent *upon settling the barrier*. The inclinations of the Dutch are so violent and plain, that I am of opinion nothing will be able to prevent their taking effect but our being as plain with them upon the same subject, and threatening to publish to the whole world the terms for which they solicit." —*Lord Godolphin to Marlborough*, Oct. 24,

the confederates rendered more difficult on this than it had been on any preceding occasion; for he had now to contend with the consequences of his own success, and allay the jealousies and stifle the cupidity which had sprung up, out of the prospect of the magnificent spoil which he himself had laid at the feet of the Allies.

But in this dangerous crisis, Marlborough's great diplomatic ability, consummate address, and thorough devotion to the common good, stood him in as good stead as his military talents had done him in the preceding campaign with Villeroi and Vendôme. In the beginning of November, he repaired to the Hague, and though he found the Dutch in the first instance so extravagant in their ideas of the barrier they were to obtain, that he despaired of effecting any settlement of the differences between them and the Emperor;[27] yet he at length succeeded, though with very great difficulty, in appeasing, for the time, the jealousies between them and the cabinet of Vienna, and obtaining a public renewal of the alliance for the prosecution of the war. The publication of this treaty diffused the utmost

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1706. Coxe, III. 74.

[27] "My inclinations will lead me to stay as little as possible at the Hague, though the Pensionary tells me I must stay to finish the succession treaty and their barrier, which, should I stay the whole winter, I am very confident would not be brought to perfection. For they are of so many minds, and are all so very extravagant about their barrier, that I despair of doing any thing good till they are more reasonable, which they will not be till they see that they have it not in their power to dispose of the whole Low Countries at their will and pleasure, in which the French flatter them." -*Marlborough to Godolphin, Oct. 29, 1706. Coxe*, III. 79.

satisfaction among the ministers of the Allied powers assembled at the Hague; and this was further increased by the breaking off, at the same time, of a negotiation which had pended for some months between Marlborough and the Elector of Bavaria, for a separate treaty with that prince, who had become disgusted with the French alliance. But all Marlborough's efforts failed to make any adjustment of the disputed matter of the barrier, on which the Dutch were so obstinately set; and finding them equally unreasonable and intractable on that subject, he deemed himself fortunate when he obtained the adjourning of the question, by the consent of all concerned, till the conclusion of a general peace.

After the adjustment of this delicate and perilous negotiation, Marlborough returned to England, where he was received with transports of exultation by all classes of the people. He was conducted in one of the royal carriages, amidst a splendid procession of all the nobility of the kingdom, to Temple Bar, where he was received by the city authorities, by whom he was feasted in the most magnificent manner at Vintners' Hall. Thanks were voted to him by both Houses of Parliament; and when he took his seat in the House of Peers, the Lord Keeper addressed him in these just and appropriate terms – "What your Grace has performed in this last campaign has far exceeded all hopes, even of such as were most affectionate and partial to their country's interest and glory. The advantages you have gained against the enemy are of such a nature, so conspicuous in themselves, so undoubtedly owing to your courage and conduct, so sensibly and

universally beneficial to the whole confederacy, that to attempt to adorn them with the colouring of words would be vain and inexcusable. Therefore I decline it, the rather because I should certainly offend that great modesty which alone can and does add lustre to your actions, and which in your Grace's example has successfully withstood as great trials, as that virtue has met with in any instance whatsoever." The House of Commons passed a similar resolution; and the better to testify the national gratitude, an annuity of £5000 a-year, charged upon the Post-Office, was settled upon the Duke and Duchess, and their descendants male or female; and the dukedom, which stood limited to heirs-male, was extended also to heirs-female, "in order," as it was finely expressed, "that England might never be without a title which might recall the remembrance of so much glory."

So much glory, however, produced its usual effect in engendering jealousy in little minds. The Whigs had grown spiteful against that illustrious pillar of their party; they were tired of hearing him called the just. Both Godolphin and Marlborough became the objects of excessive jealousy to their own party; and this, combined with the rancour of the Tories, who could never forgive his desertion of his early patron the Duke of York, had well-nigh proved fatal to him when at the very zenith of his usefulness and popularity. Intrigue was rife at St James's. Parties were strangely intermixed and disjointed. Some of the moderate Tories were in power; many covetous Whigs were out of it. Neither party stood on great public principle,

a sure sign of instability in the national councils, and ultimate neglect of the national interests. Harley's intrigues had become serious; the prime minister, Godolphin, had threatened to resign. In this alarming juncture of domestic affairs, the presence of Marlborough produced its usual pacifying and benign influence. In a long interview which he had with the Queen on his first private audience, he settled all differences; Godolphin was persuaded to withdraw his resignation; the cabinet was re-constructed on a new and harmonious basis, Harley and Bolingbroke being the only Tories of any note who remained in power; and this new peril to the prosecution of the war, and the cause of European independence, was removed.

Marlborough's services to England and the cause of European independence in this campaign, recall one mournful feeling to the British annalist. All that he had won for his country – all that Wellington, with still greater difficulty, and amidst yet brighter glories, regained for it, has been lost. It has been lost, too, not by the enemies of the nation, but by itself; not by an opposite faction, but by the very party over whom his own great exploits had shed such imperishable lustre. Antwerp, the first-fruits of Ramilies – Antwerp, the last reward of Waterloo – Antwerp, to hold which against England Napoleon lost his crown, has been abandoned to France! An English fleet has combined with a French army to wrest from Holland the barrier of Dutch independence, and the key to the Low Countries. The barrier so passionately sought by the Dutch has been wrested from them, and wrested from

them by British hands; a revolutionary power has been placed on the throne of Belgium; Flanders, instead of the outwork of Europe against France, has become the outwork of France against Europe. The tricolor flag waves in sight of Bergen-op-Zoom; within a month after the first European war, the whole coast from Bayonne to the Texel will be arrayed against Britain! The Whigs of 1832 have undone all that the Whigs of 1706 had done – all that the glories of 1815 had secured. Such is the way in which nations are ruined by the blindness of faction.

THE STUDENT OF SALAMANCA

Part II

"Por estas montañas,
Facciosos siguiendo,
Vamos defendiendo
La Constitucion."

Himno de Navarra.

Rarely had the alameda of the picturesque old town of Logroño presented a gayer or more brilliant appearance than on a certain July evening of the year 1834. The day had been sultry in the extreme, and the sun was touching the horizon before the fair Riojanas ventured to quit their artificially darkened rooms, and the cool shelter of their well-screened *miradores*, for the customary promenade. It was pleasant, certainly, in those sombre apartments, and beneath those thick awnings, which excluded each ray of sun, although they did not prevent what little breeze there was from circulating freely between the heavy stone balustrades or quaintly moulded iron-work of the spacious balconies, rustling the leaves and blossoms of the orange-trees, and wafting their fragrance to the languid beauties who sat

dozing, chatting, or love-making within. But if the *farniente* and languor induced by the almost tropical heat, were so agreeable as to tempt to their longer indulgence, on the other hand the *paseo*, that indispensable termination to a Spaniard's day, had, upon the evening in question, peculiar attractions for the inhabitants of Logroño, and especially for their fairer portion. Within the preceding three days, a body of troops, in number nearly twenty thousand men, a large portion of them the pick and flower of the Spanish army, had been concentrated at Logroño, whence, under the command of Rodil – a general of high reputation – they were to advance into Navarre, and exterminate the daring rebels, who, for some months past, had disturbed the peace of Spain. All had been noise and movement in the town during those three days; every stable full of horses, every house crowded with soldiers; artillery and baggage-waggons encumbering the squares and suburbs; the streets resounding with the harsh clang of trumpets and monotonous beat of drums; muleteers loading and unloading their beasts; commissaries bustling about for rations; beplumed and embroidered staff-officers galloping to and fro with orders; the clash of arms and tramp of horses in the barrack-yards; the clatter of wine-cups, joyous song, and merry tinkle of the guitar, from the various wine-houses in which the light-hearted soldiery were snatching a moment of enjoyment in the intervals of duty; – such were a few of the sights and sounds which for the time animated and gave importance to the usually quiet town of Logroño. Towards evening, the throng and bustle within the town

diminished, and were transferred to the pleasant walks around it, and especially to the shady and flower-bordered avenues of the alameda. Thither repaired the proud and graceful beauties of Castile and Navarre, their raven locks but partially veiled by the fascinating mantilla, their dark and lustrous eyes flashing coquettish glances upon the gay officers who accompanied or hovered around them. Every variety of uniform was there to be seen; all was blaze, and glitter, and brilliancy; the smart trappings of these fresh troops had not yet been tattered and tarnished amidst the hardships of mountain warfare. The showy hussar, the elegant lancer, the helmeted dragoon, aides-de-camp with their cocked-hats and blue sashes, crossed and mingled in the crowd that filled the alameda, at either end of which a band of music was playing the beautiful and spirit-stirring national airs of Spain. On the one hand arose the dingy masses of the houses of Logroño, speckled with the lights that issued from their open casements, their outline distinctly defined against the rapidly darkening sky; on the other side was a wide extent of corn-field, intersected and varied by rows and clusters of trees, amongst the branches of which, and over the waving surface of the corn, innumerable fire-flies darted and sparkled. Here, a group of soldiers and country girls danced a bolero to the music of a guitar and tambourine; there, another party was collected round an Andalusian ballad-singer, of whose patriotic ditties "*la Libertad*" and "*la inocente Isabel*" were the usual themes. In a third place, a few inveterate gamblers – as what Spanish soldiers

are not? – had stretched themselves upon the grass in a circle, and by the flickering light of a broken lantern, or of a candle stuck in the earth, were playing a game at cards for their day's pay, or for any thing else they might chance to possess. On all sides, ragged, bare-footed boys ran about, carrying pieces of lighted rope in their hands, the end of which they occasionally dashed against the ground, causing a shower of sparks to fly out, whilst they recommended themselves to the custom of the cigar-smokers by loud cries of "*Fuego! Buen fuego! Quien quiere fuego?*"

At few of the young officers, who, on the evening referred to, paraded the alameda of Logroño, was the artillery of eyes and fan more frequently levelled by the love-breathing beauties there assembled, than at Luis Herrera, who, in the uniform of the cavalry regiment to which he now belonged, was present upon the paseo. But for him fans waved and bright eyes sparkled in vain. He was deeply engaged in conversation with Mariano Torres, who, having recently obtained a commission in the same corps with his friend, had arrived that evening to join it. The two young men had parted soon after the death of Don Manuel Herrera, and had not met since. One of Mariano's first questions concerned the Villabuenas.

"The count went to France some months ago, I believe," replied Luis, dryly.

"Yes," said Torres, "so I heard, and took his daughter with him. But I thought it probable that he might have returned in the train of his self-styled sovereign. He is capable of any folly, I

should imagine, since he was mad enough to sacrifice his fine fortune and position in the country by joining in this absurd rebellion. You of course know that he has been declared a traitor, and that his estates have been confiscated?"

Luis nodded assent.

"Well, in some respects the count's losses may prove a gain to you," continued Torres, pursuing the train of his own thoughts, and not observing that the subject he had started was a painful one to his friend. "When we have put an end to the war, in a month or two at furthest, you can go to France, and obtain his consent to your marriage with his daughter. In the present state of his fortunes he will hardly refuse it; and you may then return to Spain, and make interest for your father-in-law's pardon."

"I am by no means certain," said Herrera, "that the war will be over so soon as you imagine. But you will oblige me, Mariano, by not speaking of this again. My engagement with Rita is long at an end, and not likely ever to be renewed. It was a dream, a vision of happiness not destined to be realized, and I endeavour to forget it. I myself put an end to it; and not under present circumstances, perhaps under none, should I think myself justified in seeking its renewal. Let us talk of something else – of the future if you will, but not of the past."

The hours passed by Luis beside Don Manuel's death-bed, had witnessed a violent revolution in his feelings and character. Devotedly attached to his father, who had been the sole friend, almost the only companion, of his boyhood, the fiercer passions

of Herrera's nature were awakened into sudden and violent action by his untimely fate. A burning desire of revenge on the unscrupulous faction to which the persecution, exile, and cruel death of Don Manuel were to be attributed, took possession of him; and in order to gratify this desire, and at the same time to fulfil the solemn pledge he had given to his dying parent, he felt himself at the moment capable of sacrificing even his love for Rita. No sooner was the mournful ceremony of the interment over, than he wrote to Villabuena, informing him, in a few stern words, how those who professed like him to be the defenders of religion and legitimacy, had enacted the part of assassins and incendiaries, and shed his father's blood upon his own threshold. This communication he considered to be, without further comment, a sufficient reply to the proposition made to him by the count a few days previously. At the same time – and this was by far the most difficult part of his self-imposed task – he addressed a letter to Rita, releasing her from her engagement. He felt, he told her, that, by so doing, he renounced all his fondest hopes; but were he to act otherwise, and at once violate his oath, and forego his revenge, he should despise himself, and deserve her contempt. He implored her to forget their ill-fated attachment, for his own misery would be endurable only when he knew that he had not compromised her happiness.

Scarcely had he dispatched these letters, written under a state of excitement almost amounting to frenzy, when Herrera, in pursuance of a previously formed plan, and as if to stifle the

regrets which a forced and painful determination occasioned him, hastened to join as a volunteer the nearest Christino column. It was one commanded by General Lorenzo, then operating against Santos Ladron and the Navarrese Carlists. In several skirmishes Herrera signalized himself by the intrepidity and fury with which he fought. Ladron was taken and shot, and Lorenzo marched to form the advanced guard of a strong division which, under the command of Sarsfield, was rapidly nearing the scene of the insurrection. On the mere approach of the Christino army, the battalions of Castilian Realistas, which formed, numerically speaking, an important part of the forces then under arms for Don Carlos, disbanded themselves and fled to their homes. Sarsfield continued his movement northwards, took possession, after trifling resistance, of Logroño, Vittoria, Bilboa, and other towns occupied by the Carlists; and, after a few insignificant skirmishes, succeeded in dispersing and disarming the whole of the insurgents in the three Basque provinces. A handful of badly armed and undisciplined Navarrese peasants were all that now kept the field for Charles V., and of the rapid capture or destruction of these, the sanguine Christinos entertained no doubt. The principal strength of the Carlists was broken; their arms were taken away; the majority of the officers who had joined, and of the men of note and influence in the country who had declared for them, had been compelled to cross the Pyrenees. But the tenacious courage and hardihood of the Navarrese insurgents, and the military skill of the man

who commanded them, baffled the unceasing pursuit kept up by the Queen's generals. During the whole of the winter the Carlists lived like wolves in the mountains, surrounded by ice and snow, cheerfully supporting the most incredible hardships and privations. Nay, even under such disadvantageous circumstances, their numbers increased, and their discipline improved; and when the spring came they presented the appearance, not of a band of robbers, as their opponents had hitherto designated them, but of a body of regular troops, hardy and well organized, devoted to their general, and enthusiastic for the cause they defended. Their rapid movements, their bravery and success in several well-contested skirmishes, some of which almost deserved the name of regular actions, the surprise of various Christino posts and convoys, the consistency, in short, which the war was taking, began seriously to alarm the Queen's government; and the formidable preparations made by the latter for a campaign against the Carlists, were a tacit acknowledgment that Spain was in a state of civil war.

In the wild and beautiful valley of the Lower Amezcoa, in the *merindad* or district of Estella, a large body of Christino troops was assembled on the fifteenth day after Rodil's entrance into Navarre. The numerous forces which that general found under his command, after uniting the troops he had brought with him with those already in the province, had enabled him to adopt a system of occupation, the most effectual, it was believed, for putting an end to the war. In pursuance of this

plan, he established military lines of communication between the different towns of Navarre and Alava, garrisoned and fortified the principal villages, and having in this manner disseminated a considerable portion of his army through the insurgent districts, he commenced, with a column of ten thousand men that remained at his disposal, a movement through the mountainous regions, to which, upon his approach, the Carlists had retired. His object was the double one of attacking and destroying their army, and, if possible, of seizing the person of Don Carlos, who but a few days previously had arrived in Spain. The heat of the weather was remarkable, even for that usually sultry season; the troops had had a long and fatiguing march over the rugged sierra of Urbasa; and Rodil, either with a view of giving them rest, or with some intention of garrisoning the villages scattered about the valley, which had hitherto been one of the chief haunts of the Carlists, had come to a halt in the Lower Amezcoa.

It was two in the afternoon, and, notwithstanding the presence of so large a body of men, all was stillness and repose in the valley. The troops had arrived that morning, and after taking up their cantonments in the various villages and hamlets, had sought refuge from the overpowering heat. In the houses, the shutters of which were carefully closed to exclude the importunate sunbeams, in the barns and stables, under the shadow cast by balconies or projecting eaves, and along the banks of the stream which traverses the valley, and is noted in the surrounding country for the crystal clearness and extreme coldness of its

waters, the soldiers were lying, their uniforms unbuttoned, the stiff leathern stock thrown aside, enjoying the mid-day slumber, which the temperature and their recent fatigue rendered doubly acceptable. Here and there, at a short distance from the villages, and further off, near the different roads and passes that give access to the valley through or over the gigantic mountain-wall by which it is encircled, the sun flashed upon the polished bayonets and musket-barrels of the pickets. The men were lying beside their piled arms, or had crept under some neighbouring bush to indulge in the universal *siesta*; and even the sentries seemed almost to sleep as they paced lazily up and down, or stood leaning upon their muskets, keeping but a drowsy watch and careless look-out for an enemy whose proximity was neither to be anticipated nor dreaded by a force so superior to any which he could get together.

Such was the scene that presented itself to one who, having approached the valley from the south, and ascended the mountains that bound it on that side, now contemplated from their summit the inactivity of its occupants. He was a man of the middle height, but appearing rather shorter, from a slight stoop in the shoulders; his age was between forty and fifty years, his aspect grave and thoughtful. His features were regular, his eyes clear and penetrating, a strong dark mustache covered his upper lip and joined his whisker, which was allowed to extend but little below the ear. His dress consisted of a plain blue frock, girt at the waist by a belt of black leather, to which a sabre was

suspended, and his head was covered with a *boina*, or flat cap, of the description commonly worn in the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees, woven in one piece of fine scarlet wool, and decorated with a *borla*, or tassel of gold cord, spreading like a star over the crown of the head. In his hand he held a telescope, which he rested on the top of a fragment of rock, and through which he attentively noted what passed in the valley below. The case of the field-glass was slung across his body by a strap, and, upon inspection, a name would have been found stamped upon its leathern surface. It was that of Tomas Zumalacarregui.

A short distance in rear of the Carlist leader, and so posted as not to be visible from the valley, stood a little group of officers, and persons in civilian garb, and a few orderlies, one of whom held the general's horse. Behind, a battalion of infantry was drawn up – fine, muscular, active fellows, inured to every hardship, and as indifferent to the scorching heat to which they were now exposed, as they had been to the bitter cold in the mountains amongst which they had passed the preceding winter. Their appearance was not very uniform in its details; short jackets, loose trousers, and sandals, composed the dress of most of them – one well adapted to long marches and active movements – and they all wore caps similar to those of the officers, but of a blue colour, and coarser material. A second battalion of these hardy guerillas was advancing with light and elastic step up the rugged and difficult path; and this was followed by two others, which, as fast as they arrived,

were formed up by their officers in the best manner that the uneven nature of the ground would admit. Half a dozen mules, laden with ammunition, brought up the rear. When the four battalions, consisting together of nearly three thousand men, were assembled on the summit of the mountain, the arms were piled, and the soldiers allowed to sit down or repose themselves as they chose from the fatigues of their long and wearisome ascent, and of a march that had lasted from early dawn.

The mountain upon which these troops were now stationed was less precipitous upon its inner side than most of those that surrounded the valley. It shelved gradually downwards, broken here and there by ravines, its partially wooded slopes forming a succession of terraces, which extended right and left for a distance of more than a mile. At the foot of these slopes, and immediately below the spot occupied by the Carlists, a low hill ran off at right angles from the higher range, projecting into the valley as a promontory does into the sea. With the exception of the side furthest from the mountains, which consisted of pasture land, the base and skirts of this hill were covered with oak and chestnut, and upon the clearing on its summit stood a shepherd's hut, whence was commanded a view of a considerable extent of the face of the sierra, as well as of the entrance of a neighbouring pass that led out of the valley in the direction of Estella. At this hut a Christino picket was stationed, to which, when the Carlist chief had completed his general survey of the valley, his attention became more particularly directed. The outpost consisted of

about thirty men, little, brown-complexioned, monkey-faced creatures from the southern provinces, who, sunk in fancied security and in the indolence natural to them, were neglecting their duty to an extent which might seriously have compromised the safety of the Christino army, had it depended upon their vigilance. The majority of them were lying asleep in and around the picket-house, which was situated on one side of the platform, within fifty yards of the trees. Of the three sentinels, one had seated himself on a stone, with his musket between his knees, and, having unbuttoned the loose grey coat that hung like a sack about his wizened carcass, was busily engaged in seeking, between his shirt and his skin, for certain companions whom he had perhaps picked up in his quarters of the previous night, and by whose presence about his person he seemed to be but moderately gratified. One of the other two sentries had wandered away from the post assigned to him, and approached his remaining comrade, with the charitable view of dividing with him a small quantity of tobacco, which the two were now deliberately manufacturing into paper cigars, beguiling the time as they did so by sundry guardroom jokes and witticisms.

An almost imperceptible smile of contempt curled the lip of Zumalacarregui as he observed the unmilitary negligence apparent in the advanced post of the Christinos. It was exchanged for a proud and well-pleased glance when he turned round and saw his gallant Navarrese awaiting in eager suspense a signal to advance upon the enemy, whom they knew to be close at hand.

Zumalacarregui walked towards the nearest battalion, and on his approach the men darted from their various sitting and reclining postures, and stood ready to seize their muskets, and fall into their places. Their chief nodded his approbation of their alacrity, but intimated to them, by a motion of his hand, that the time for action was not yet come.

"*Paciencia, muchachos!*" said he. "Patience, you will not have long to wait. Refresh yourselves, men, whilst the time is given you. Captain Landa!" cried he, raising his voice.

The officer commanding the light company of the battalion stepped forward, and, halting at a short distance from his general, stood motionless, with his hand to his cap, awaiting orders.

"Come with me, Landa," said Zumalacarregui; and, taking the officer's arm, he led him to the spot whence he had been observing the valley, and pointed to the Christino picket.

"Take your company," said he, "and fetch me those sleepy fellows here; without firing a shot if it be possible."

The officer returned to his men, and, forming them up with all speed, marched them off at a rapid pace. When they had disappeared amongst the rocks, Zumalacarregui turned to the chief of his staff.

"Colonel Gomez," said he, "take the third and fourth battalions, and move them half a mile to our left, keeping them well out of sight. We are not strong enough to attack in the plain, but we shall perhaps get our friends to meet us in the mountain."

Gomez – a tall, portly man, of inexpressive countenance,

and whose accent, when he spoke, betrayed the Andalusian – proceeded to execute the orders he had received, and Zumalacarregui once more resumed his post of observation.

The carelessness of the Christino picket, and the practice which the Carlists had already had in a warfare of stratagem and surprise, enabled the company of light infantry to execute, with great facility, the instructions they had received. The young ensign who commanded the outpost was walking listlessly along the edge of the wood, cursing the wearisome duty entrusted to him, and referring to his watch to see how far still the hour of relief was off, when he was suddenly struck to the ground by a blow from a musket-butt, and before he could attempt to rise, the point of a bayonet was at his throat. At the same instant three score long-legged Navarrese dashed from under cover of the wood, bayoneted the sentinels, surrounded the picket-house, and made prisoners of the picket. The surprise was complete; not a shot had been fired, and all had passed with so little noise that it appeared probable the *coup-de-main* would only become known to the Christinos when the time arrived for relieving the outposts.

A trifling oversight, however, on the part of the Carlists, caused things to pass differently. A soldier belonging to the picket, and who was sleeping amongst the long grass, just within the wood, had escaped all notice. The noise of the scuffle awoke him; but on perceiving how matters stood, he prudently remained in his hiding-place till the Carlists, having collected the arms and ammunition of their prisoners, began to reascend the mountain.

At a distance of three hundred yards he fired at them, and then scampered off in the contrary direction. His bullet took no effect, and the retreating guerillas, seeing how great a start he had, allowed him to escape unpursued. But the report of his musket spread the alarm. The pickets right and left of the one that had been surprised, saw the Carlists winding their way up the mountain; the vedettes fired, and the drums beat to arms. The alarm spread rapidly from one end of the valley to the other, and every part of it was in an instant swarming with men. Dragoons saddled and artillery harnessed; infantry formed up by battalions and brigades; generals and aides-de-camp dashed about hurrying the movements of the troops, and asking the whereabouts of the enemy. This information they soon obtained. No sooner was the alarm given, than Zumalacarregui, relying upon the tried courage of his soldiers, and on the advantage of his position, which must render the enemy's cavalry useless, and greatly diminish the effect of the artillery, put himself at the head of his two battalions, and rapidly descended the mountain, dispatching an officer after Gomez with orders for a similar movement on his part. Before the Carlists reached the plain, the Christinos quartered in the nearest village advanced to meet them, and a smart skirmish began.

Distributed along the clifts and terraces of the mountain, kneeling amongst the bushes and sheltered behind the trees that grew at its base, the Carlists kept up a steady fire, which was warmly replied to by their antagonists. In the most exposed

situations, the Carlist officers of all ranks, from the ensign to the general, showed themselves, encouraging their men, urging them to take good aim, and not to fire till they could distinguish the faces of their enemies, themselves sometimes taking up a dead man's musket and sending a few well-directed shots amongst the Christinos. Here a man was seen binding the sash, which forms part of the dress of every Navarrese peasant, over a wound that was not of sufficient importance to send him to the rear; in another place a guerilla replenished his scanty stock of ammunition from the cartridge-belt of a fallen comrade, and sprang forward, to meet perhaps, the next moment, a similar fate. On the side of the Christinos there was less appearance of enthusiasm and ardour for the fight; but their numbers were far superior, and each moment increased, and some light guns and howitzers that had been brought up began to scatter shot and shell amongst the Carlists, although the manner in which the latter were sheltered amongst wood and rock, prevented those missiles from doing them very material injury. The fight was hottest around the hill on which the picket had been stationed, now the most advanced point of the Carlist line. It was held by a battalion, which, dispersed amongst the trees that fringed its sides, opposed a fierce resistance to the assaults of the Christinos. At last the latter, weary of the protracted skirmishing, by which they lost many men, but were unable to obtain any material advantage, sent forward two battalions of the royal guards to take the hill at the point of the bayonet. With their bugles playing

a lively march, these troops, the finest infantry in the Spanish army, advanced in admirable order, and without firing a shot, to perform the duty assigned to them. On their approach the Carlists retreated from the sides of the hill, and assembled in the wood on its summit, at the foot of the higher mountains. One battalion of the guards ascended the hill in line, and advanced along the open ground, whilst the other marched round the skirt of the eminence to take the Carlists in flank. The Navarrese reserved their fire till they saw the former battalion within fifty yards of them, and then poured in a deadly volley. The ranks of the Christinos were thinned, but they closed them again, and, with levelled bayonets and quickened step, advanced to clear the wood, little expecting that the newly-raised troops opposed to them would venture to meet them at close quarters. The event, however, proved that they had undervalued their antagonists. Emerging from their shelter, the Carlists brought their bayonets to the charge, and, with a ringing shout of "*Viva Carlos Quinto!*" rushed upon their foe. A griding clash of steel and a shrill cry of agony bore witness to the fury of the encounter. The loss on both sides was severe, but the advantage remained with the Carlists. The guards, unprepared for so obstinate a resistance, were borne back several paces, and thrown into some confusion. But the victors had no time to follow up their advantage, for the other Christino battalion had entered the wood, and was advancing rapidly upon their flank. Hastily collecting their wounded, the Carlists retired, still fighting, to the higher ground in their rear.

At the same moment Zumalacarregui, observing a body of fresh troops making a movement upon his right, as if with the intention of outflanking him, ordered the retreat to be sounded, and the Carlist line retired slowly up the mountains. Some of Rodil's battalions followed, and the skirmishing was kept up with more or less spirit till an end was put to it by the arrival of night.

From the commencement of the fight, several squadrons of the Queen's cavalry had remained drawn up near a village in which they had their quarters, at about a mile from the left of the Carlists. A short distance in front of the line, a number of officers had collected together, and were observing the progress of the combat, in which the impracticability of the ground for horsemen prevented them from taking a share. There was considerable grumbling, especially amongst the juniors, at the inactivity to which they found themselves condemned.

"If this is the kind of fighting we are always to have," said a young cornet sulkily, "they might as well have left us in our garrisons. We were a deuced deal more comfortable, and quite as useful, in our snug quarters at Valladolid. The faction, it is well known, have no cavalry, and you will not catch their infernal guerillas coming down into the plain to be sabred at leisure."

"No," said another subaltern, "but they are forming cavalry, it is said. Besides, we may catch their infantry napping some day, as they did our picket just now."

"Pshaw!" replied the first speaker. "Before that time comes every horse in the brigade will be lame or sore-backed, and we

ourselves shall be converted into infantry men. All respect for lance and sabre – but curse me if I would not rather turn foot-soldier at once, than have to crawl over these mountains as we have done for the last fortnight, dragging our horses after us by the bridle. For six hours yesterday did I flounder over ground that was never meant to be trod by any but bears or izards, breaking my spurs and shins, whilst my poor nag here was rubbing the skin off his legs against rocks and tree-stumps. When I entered the cavalry I expected my horse would carry me; but if this goes on, it is much more likely I shall have to carry him."

"A nice set of fellows you are," said an old grey-mustached captain, "to be grumbling before you have been a month in the field. Wait a bit, my boys, till your own flesh and your horses' have been taken down by hard marching and short commons, and until, if you mount a hill, you are obliged to hold on by the mane, lest the saddle should slip back over the lean ribs of your charger. The marches you have as yet seen are but child's play to what you *will* see before the campaign is over."

"Then hang me if I don't join the footpads," returned the dissatisfied cornet. "At any rate one would have a little fighting then – a chance of a broken head or t'other epaulet; and that is better than carrying a sabre one never has to draw. Why, the very mules cannot keep their footing amongst these mountains. Ask our quartermaster, whom I saw yesterday craning over the edge of a precipice, and watching two of his beasts of burden which were going down hill a deal quicker than they had come

up – their legs in the air, and the sacks of corn upon their backs hastening their descent to some ravine or other, where the crows no doubt at the present moment are picking their bones. You should have heard old Skinflint swear. I thought he would have thrown the muleteer after the mules. And they call this a country for cavalry!"

"I certainly fear," said Herrera, who had been listening to the colloquy, "that as long as the war is confined to these provinces, cavalry will not be very often wanted."

"And if they were not here, they would be wanted immediately," said a field-officer, who was observing the skirmish through a telescope. "Besides, you young gentlemen have less cause for discontent than any body else. There may be no opportunity for brilliant charges, but there is always work for a subaltern's party, in the way of cutting off detachments, or some such *coup-de-main*. I see a group of fellows yonder who will get themselves into trouble if they do not take care."

All eyes and glasses turned towards the direction in which the major was looking. It was the hottest moment of the fight; by their impetuosity and courage the Carlists were keeping at bay the superior numbers of their antagonists; and on their extreme left, a small party of horsemen, consisting of four or five officers and a dozen lancers, had ventured to advance a short distance into the plain. They had halted at the edge of a *manzanal*, or cider orchard; and although some way in advance of their own line, they were at a considerable distance from any

Christino troops; whilst a tolerably good path, which led up the least precipitous part of the mountains in their rear, seemed to ensure them an easy retreat whenever it might become necessary. So confident were they of their safety, that the officers had dismounted, and were observing the Christino reserves, and the various bodies of infantry which were advancing from the more distant cantonments. At this moment the officer commanding the cavalry rode up to the spot where Herrera and his comrades were assembled.

"Major Gonzalez," said he, "send half a troop to cut off those gentlemen who are reconnoitring. Let the party file off to the rear, or their intention will be perceived."

The subalterns belonging to the squadron under command of Gonzalez, pressed round him, eager to be chosen for the duty that was to vary the monotony and inaction of which they had so recently been complaining.

"Herrera," said the major, "you have most practice in this sort of thing. Take thirty men and march them back into the village, out on the other side, and round that rising ground upon our right. There is plenty of cover, and if you make the most of it, the game cannot escape. And, a hint to you – your fellows generally grind their sabres pretty sharp, I know, and you are not fond of encumbering yourself with prisoners; but yonder party, judging from their appearance, may be men of note amongst the rebels, worth more alive than dead. Bring them in with whole skins if you can. As to the fellows with the red and white lance-flags, I

leave them entirely at your discretion."

"I shall observe your orders, major," replied Herrera, whose eyes sparkled at the prospect of a brush with the enemy. "Sergeant Velasquez, tell off thirty men from the left of the troop."

The non-commissioned officer, who was introduced to the reader at the commencement of this narrative, and who now found himself, in consequence of a change of regiment, in the same squadron as Herrera, obeyed the order he had received, and the party marched leisurely into the village. No sooner, however, had they entered the narrow street, and were concealed from the view of those whom they intended to surprise, than their pace was altered to a brisk trot, which became a hand-gallop when they got into the fields beyond the rising ground referred to by the major. They then struck into a hollow road, sheltered by bush-crowned banks, and finally reached the long narrow strip of apple-orchard, at the further angle of which the group of Carlists was posted. Skirting the plantation on the reverse side to the enemy, they arrived at its extremity, and wheeling to the left, cantered on in line, their sabre scabbards hooked up to their belts to diminish the clatter, the noise of their horses' feet inaudible upon the grass and fern over which they rode. "Charge!" shouted Herrera, as they reached the second angle of the orchard; and with a loud hurra and brandished sabres, the dragoons dashed down upon the little party of Carlists, now within a hundred paces of them. The dismounted officers hurried to their horses,

and the lancers hastily faced about to resist the charge; but before they could complete the movement, they were sabred and ridden over. Herrera, mindful of the orders he had received, hurried to protect the officers from a similar fate. One of the latter, who had his back turned to Herrera, and who, although he wore a sword by his side, was dressed in plain clothes, was in the very act of getting into the saddle, when a dragoon aimed a furious cut at his head. Herrera was in time to parry the blow, and as he did so, the person whose life he had saved, turned round and disclosed the well-known features of the Conde de Villabuena.

"Señor Conde!" exclaimed the astonished Luis, "I am grieved" —

"It is unnecessary, sir," said the count, coldly. "You are obeying orders, I presume, and doing what you consider your duty. Am I to be shot here, or taken to your chief?"

"It is much against my will," answered Herrera, "that I constrain you in any way. I am compelled to conduct you to General Rodil."

The count made no reply, but, turning his horse's head in the direction of the Christino camp, rode moodily onwards, followed, rather then accompanied, by his captor. A Carlist officer and three members of the rebel junta were the other prisoners. The lancers had all been cut to pieces.

The position in which Herrera now found himself was in the highest degree embarrassing and painful. Old affection and friendship were revived by the sight of the count; and, had he

obeyed his first impulse, he would frankly have expressed his sorrow at the chance which had thrown Villabuena into the hands of his foes, and have said what he could to console him under his misfortune. But the count's manner was so haughty and repulsive, and he so studiously avoided recognising in Luis any thing more than an opponent and a captor, that the words of kindness froze upon the young man's tongue, and during the few minutes that were required to rejoin the regiment, the silence remained unbroken. On reaching the spot where the cavalry was still halted, the detachment was received with loud congratulations on the successful issue of the expedition.

"Cleverly managed, Señor Herrera!" said the colonel; "and the prisoners are of importance. Take them yourself to the general."

In obedience to this order, Herrera moved off to the part of the field in which Rodil, surrounded by a numerous and brilliant staff, had taken his post.

"Ha!" said the general, when the young officer had made his report, his quick eye glancing at the prisoners, some of whom were known to him by sight. "Ha! you have done well, sir, and your conduct shall be favourably reported at Madrid. The Marquis of Torralva and Count Villabuena – an important capture this. Your name, sir – and yours, and yours?" said he sharply to the other prisoners.

The answers visibly increased his satisfaction. They were all men well known as zealous and influential partizans of the Pretender. Rodil paused an instant, and then turned to one of his

aides-de-camp.

"A priest and a firing party," said he. "You have half an hour to prepare for death," he added, addressing the prisoners. "Rebels taken with arms in their hands can expect no greater favour."

Herrera felt a cold chill come over him as he heard this order given for the instant execution of a man whom he had so long regarded as his friend and benefactor. Forgetting, in the agitation of the moment, his own subordinate position, and the impropriety of his interference, he was about to address the general, and petition for the life of Villabuena, when he was saved from the commission of a breach of discipline by the interposition of a third party. A young man in the uniform of a general officer, of sallow complexion and handsome countenance, who was stationed upon Rodil's right hand, moved his horse nearer to that of the general, and spoke a few words to him in a low tone of voice. Rodil seemed to listen with attention, and to reflect a moment before replying.

"You are right, Cordova," said he; "they may be worth keeping as hostages; and I will delay their death till I can communicate with her Majesty's government. Let them be strictly guarded, and sent to-morrow to Pampeluna under good escort. Your name, sir?" said he, turning to Herrera.

Herrera told his name and regiment.

"Luis Herrera," repeated Rodil; "I have heard it before, as that of a brave and promising officer. Well, sir, since you have taken these prisoners, you shall keep them. Yourself and a detachment

of your squadron will form part of their escort to Pampeluna."

The flattering words of his general went but a short way towards reconciling Luis to the unpleasant task of escorting his former friend to a captivity which would in all probability find its termination in a violent death. With a heavy heart he saw Villabuena and the other prisoners led off to the house that was to serve as their place of confinement for the night; and still more painful were his feelings, when he thought of Rita's grief on receiving intelligence of her father's peril, perhaps of his execution. In order to alleviate to the utmost of his power the present position of the count, he recommended him to the care of the officer placed on guard over him, who promised to allow his prisoner every indulgence consistent with his safe keeping. And although the escort duty assigned to him was in some respects so unpleasant to fulfil, Herrera became almost reconciled to it by the reflection, that he might be able to spare Villabuena much of the hardship and rough treatment to which his captivity exposed him.

The first grey light of morning had scarcely appeared in the Lower Amezcoa, stealing over the mountain-tops, and indistinctly shadowing forth the objects in the plain, when the stillness that had reigned in the valley since the conclusion of the preceding day's skirmish, was broken by the loud and joyous clang of the reveillé. At various points of the Christino cantonments, the brazen instruments of the cavalry, and the more numerous, but perhaps less martially sounding, bands of

the infantry regiments, were rousing the drowsy soldiers from their slumbers, and awakening the surrounding echoes by the wild melody of Riego's hymn. Gradually the sky grew brighter, the last lingering stars disappeared, the summits of the western mountains were illuminated with a golden flush, and the banks and billows of white mist that rested on the meadows, and hung upon the hillsides, began to melt away and disappear at the approach of the sun's rays. In the fields and on the roads near the different villages, the troops were seen assembling, the men silent and heavy-eyed, but refreshed and invigorated by the night's repose, the horses champing their bits, and neighing with impatience. Trains of mules, laden with sacks of corn and rations, that from their weight might be deemed sufficient load for as many dromedaries, issued from barn and stable, expending their superfluous strength and spirit by kicking and biting viciously at each other, and were ranged in rear of the troops, where also carts and litters, containing wounded men, awaited the order for departure. The sergeant-majors called the roll of their troops and companies; whilst the men, leaning upon their muskets, or sitting at ease in their saddles, munched fragments of the brown ration bread, smoked the cigarette, or received from the hands of the tawny-visaged sutlers and *cantinieras*, who walked up and down the ranks, an antidote to the effects of the cool morning air, in the shape of a glass of *aguardiente*. When all preparations were completed, and the time necessary for the forming up of so numerous a body of men had elapsed, the order to march was

given, and the troops moved off in a southerly direction.

Whilst this general movement took place, a detachment, consisting of four companies of infantry, and fifty dragoons, separated itself from the main body, and took the road to Pampeluna, whither it was to escort Count Villabuena and his fellow captives. The country to the north-east of the Amezcoa, through which they would have to pass, was known to be free from Carlists, with the exception of unimportant parties of armed peasants; Rodil himself had gone in pursuit of Zumalacarregui, who had retired in the same direction whence he had approached the valley; and therefore this escort, although so few in number, was deemed amply sufficient to convey the prisoners in all safety to their destination, to which one long day's march would bring them. The detachment was commanded by a major of infantry – a young man who had acquired what military experience he possessed in the ease and sloth of a garrison life, during which, however, thanks to certain influential recommendations, he had found promotion come so quickly that he had not the same reason with many of his comrades to be satisfied with the more active and dangerous service to which he had recently been called. Inwardly congratulating himself on the change which his present duty ensured him from the hardships of bivouacs and bad quarters to at least a day or two's enjoyment of the fleshpots of Pampeluna, he rode gaily along at the head of the escort, chatting and laughing with his second in command. Behind him came Herrera and his dragoons, and in rear of them

the prisoners, on either side of whom marched foot-soldiers with fixed bayonets. The body of infantry brought up the rear. Strict orders had been given against conversing with the captives; and Herrera was compelled, therefore, to abandon the intention he had formed of endeavouring to break down the barrier of cold reserve within which Count Villabuena had fenced himself, and of offering such assistance and comfort as it was in his power to give. He was forced to be contented with keeping near the prisoners, in order to protect them from any abuse or ill-treatment on the part of the soldiery.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.