

Paget, with the Reserve, which Corps had moved out of its Cantonments to support the Right of the Army, by a vigorous Attack, defeated this Intention. The Major-General, having pushed forward the 95th (Rifle Corps) and 1st Battalion 52d Regiments, drove the Enemy before him, and in his rapid and judicious Advance, threatened the Left of the Enemy's Position. This Circumstance, with the Position of Lieutenant-General Fraler's Division, (calculated to give still further Security to the Right of the Line) induced the Enemy to relax his Efforts in that Quarter.

They were however more forcibly directed towards the Centre, where they were again successfully resisted by the Brigade under Major-General Manningham, forming the Left of your Division, and a Part of that under Major General Leith, forming the Right of the Division under my Orders. Upon the Left, the Enemy at first contented himself with an Attack upon our Piquets, which however in general maintained their Ground. Finding however his Efforts unavailing on the Right and Centre, he seemed determined to render the Attack upon the Left more serious, and had succeeded in obtaining Possession of the Village through which the great Road to Madrid passes, and which was situated in Front of that Part of the Line. From this Post, however, he was soon expelled, with considerable Loss, by a gallant Attack of some Companies of the 2d Battalion 14th Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Nicholls; before Five in the Evening, we had not only successfully repelled every Attack made upon the Position, but had gained Ground in almost all Points, and occupied a more forward Line, than at the Commencement of the Action, whilst the Enemy confined his Operations to a Cannonade, and the Fire of his Light Troops, with a View to draw off his other Corps. At Six the Firing entirely ceased. The different Brigades were re-assembled on the Ground they occupied in the Morning, and the Piquets and Advanced Posts, resumed their original Stations.

Notwithstanding the decided and marked Superiority which at this Moment the Gallantry of the Troops had given them over an Enemy, who from his Numbers and the commanding Advantages of his Position, no doubt expected an easy Victory, I did not, on reviewing all Circumstances conceive that I should be warranted in departing from what I knew was the fixed and previous Determination of the late Commander of the Forces to withdraw the Army on the Evening of the 16th, for the Purpose of Embarkation, the previous Arrangements for which had already been made by his Order, and were in fact far advanced at the Commencement of the Action. The Troops quitted their Position about Ten at Night, with a Degree of Order that did them credit. The whole of the Artillery that remained unembarked, having been withdrawn, the Troops followed in the Order prescribed, and marched to their respective Points of Embarkation in the Town and Neighbourhood of Corunna. The Piquets remained at their Posts until Five on the Morning of the 17th, when they were also withdrawn with similar Orders, and without the Enemy having discovered the Movement.

By the unremitting Exertion of Captains the Honourable H. Curzon, Gosselin, Boys, Rainier, Serret, Hawkins, Digby, Carden, and Mackenzie,

of the Royal Navy, who, in pursuance of the Orders of Rear Admiral de Courcy, were entrusted with the Service of embarking the Army; and in consequence of the Arrangements made by Commissioner Bowen, Captains Bowen and Shepherd, and the other Agents for Transports, the Whole of the Army was embarked with an Expedition which has seldom been equalled. With the Exception of the Brigades under Major Generals Hill and Beresford, which were destined to remain on Shore, until the Movements of the Enemy should become manifest, the whole was afloat before Day-Light.

The Brigade of Major-General Beresford, which was alternately to form our Rear-Guard, occupied the Land Front of the Town of Corunna; that under Major-General Hill was stationed in Reserve on the Promontory in Rear of the Town.

The Enemy pushed his Light Troops towards the Town soon after Eight o'Clock in the Morning of the 17th, and shortly after occupied the Heights of St. Lucia, which command the Harbour. But notwithstanding this Circumstance, and the manifold Defects of the Place; there being no Apprehension that the Rear-Guard could be forced, and the Disposition of the Spaniards appearing to be good, the Embarkation of Major-General Hill's Brigade was commenced and completed by Three in the Afternoon; Major-General Beresford, with that Zeal and Ability which is so well known to yourself and the whole Army, having fully explained, to the Satisfaction of the Spanish Governor, the Nature of our Movement, and having made every previous Arrangement, withdrew his Corps from the Land Front of the Town soon after Dark, and was, with all the wounded that had not been previously moved, embarked before One this Morning.

Circumstances forbid us to indulge the Hope, that the Victory with which it has pleased Providence to crown the Efforts of the Army, can be attended with any very brilliant Consequences to Great Britain. It is clouded by the Loss of one of her best Soldiers. It has been achieved at the Termination of a long and harassing Service. The superior Numbers, and advantageous Position of the Enemy, not less than the actual Situation of this Army, did not admit of any Advantage being reaped from Success. It must be however to you, to the Army, and to our Country, the sweetest Reflection that the Lustre of the British Arms has been maintained, amidst many disadvantageous Circumstances. The Army which had entered Spain, amidst the fairest Prospects, had no sooner completed its Junction, than owing to the multiplied Disasters that dispersed the Native Armies around us, it was left to its own Resources. The Advance of the British Corps from the Duero, afforded the best Hope that the South of Spain might be relieved, but this generous Effort to save the unfortunate People, also afforded the Enemy the Opportunity of directing every Effort of his numerous Troops, and concentrating all his principal Resources for the Destruction of the only regular Force in the North of Spain.

You are well aware with what Diligence this System has been pursued.

These Circumstances produced the Necessity of rapid and harassing Marches, which had diminished the Numbers, exhausted the Strength, and impaired the Equipment of the Army. Notwithstanding all

