

was beyond all risk of being attacked by a superior force on the 21st. The enemy's troops have retired into Cordova.

Since the accounts have been received of Lieutenant-General Sir Rowland Hill's expedition, the enemy's troops have likewise been put in motion in Old and New Castile; the 1st division, under General Foy, and a division of the Army of the Centre under General D'Armagnac, crossed the Tagus by the bridge of Arzobispo on the 21st, and have moved by the road of Deleytosa, to relieve or withdraw the post which still remained in the tower of Mirabete.

The whole of the army of Portugal have likewise made a movement to their left; the 2d division being on the Tagus, and Marshal Marmont's head-quarters have been removed from Salamanca to Fontieros.

By a letter from Sir Howard Douglas, of the 24th instant, I learn that the troops under General Bonnet, after having made two plundering excursions towards the frontiers of Galicia, had again entered the Asturias, and was on the 17th in possession of Oviedo, Gijon, and Grado.

In the meantime the troops under General Mendizabel are in possession of the town of Burgos, the enemy still keeping the castle; and in all parts of the country the boldness and activity of the chiefs of Guerillas are increasing; and their operations against the enemy are becoming daily more important.

I forward this dispatch by Major Currie, Aide-de-Camp to Lieutenant-General Sir Rowland Hill, whom I beg leave to recommend to your Lordship's notice and protection.

My Lord, *Truxillo, May 21, 1812.*

I HAVE the satisfaction to acquaint your Lordship, that your instructions relative to the capture and destruction of the enemy's works at Almaraz have been most fully carried into effect by a detachment of troops under my orders, which marched from Almendralejo on the 12th instant.

The bridge was, as your Lordship knows, protected by strong works thrown up by the French on both sides of the river; and further covered on the southern side by the castle and redoubts of Mirabete about a league off, commanding the pass of that name, through which runs the road to Madrid, being the only one passable for carriages of any description by which the bridge can be approached.

The works on the left bank of the river were a tête-du-pont, built of masonry, and strongly entrenched, and on the high ground above it, a large and well-constructed fort, called Napoleon, with an interior intrenchment, and loop-holed tower in its centre. This fort contained nine pieces of cannon, with a garrison of between four and five hundred men. There being also on the opposite side of the river, on a height immediately above the bridge, a very complete fort recently constructed, which flanked and added much to its defence.

On the morning of the 16th, the troops reached Jaraicejo, and the same evening marched in three columns; the left column, commanded by Lieutenant-General Chowne (28th and 34th regiments,

under Colonel Wilson, and the 6th Portuguese Cadagores), towards the castle of Mirabete; the right column, under Major-General Howard (50th, 71st, and 92d regiments), which I accompanied myself, to a pass in the mountains; through which a most difficult and circuitous foot-path leads by the village of Romangordo to the bridge; the centre column, under Major-General Long (6th and 18th Portuguese infantry, under Colonel Ashworth, and 13th light dragoons; with the artillery), advanced upon the high road to the pass of Mirabete.

The two flank columns were provided with ladders, and it was intended that either of them should proceed to escalate the forts against which they were directed, had circumstances proved favourable; the difficulties, however, which each had to encounter on its march were such, that it was impossible for them to reach their respective points before daybreak; I judged it best therefore, as there was no longer a possibility of surprize, to defer the attack, until we should be better acquainted with the nature and position of the works, and the troops bivouacked on the Leina.

I determined on endeavouring to penetrate to the bridge by the mountain path leading through the village of Roman gordo, although, by that means, I should be deprived of the use of my artillery.

On the evening of the 18th I moved with Major-General Howard's brigade, and the 6th Portuguese regiment for the operation, provided with scaling ladders, &c. Although the distance marched did not exceed five or six miles, the difficulties of the road were such, that with the united exertions of officers and men, the column could not be formed for the attack before daylight. Confiding, however, in the valour of the troops, I ordered the immediate assault of Fort Napoleon. My confidence was fully justified by the event.

The 1st battalion of the 50th, and one wing of the 71st regiment, regardless of the enemy's artillery and musquetry, escalated the work in three places, nearly at the same time. The enemy seemed at first determined, and his fire was destructive, but the ardour of our troops was irresistible, and the garrison was driven at the point of the bayonet, through the several intrenchments of the fort and Tete du Pont, across the bridge, which having been cut by those on the opposite side of the river, many leaped into the river and thus perished.

The impression made upon the enemy's troops was such, that panic soon communicated itself to those on the right bank of the river, and Fort Ragusa was instantly abandoned, the garrison flying in the greatest confusion towards Naval Moral.

I cannot sufficiently praise the conduct of the 50th and 71st regiments, to whom the assault fell. The cool and steady manner in which they formed and advanced, and the intrepidity with which they mounted the ladders, and carried the place, was worthy of those distinguished corps, and the officers who led them.

Could the attack have been made before day, the 92d regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, and the remainder of the 71st regiment, under the Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel Cadogan, were to have escalated the tête-du-pont, and effected the destruction of the bridge, at the same time that the attack was made on Fort Napoleon. The impossi-