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WAR DEPARTMENT.

Downing-Street, April 26, 1814.

MAJOR Lord William Russell arrived last night at this Office, bringing a dispatch from the Marquess of Wellington to Earl Bathurst, of which the following is a copy :

MY LORD, *Toulouse, April 12, 1814.*

I HAVE the pleasure to inform your Lordship that I entered this town this morning, which the enemy evacuated during the night, retiring by the road of Carcassone.

The continued fall of rain, and the state of the roads, prevented me from laying the bridge till the morning of the 8th, when the Spanish corps, and the Portuguese artillery, under the immediate orders of Lieutenant-General Don Manuel Freyre, and the head-quarters, crossed the Garonne.

We immediately moved forward to the neighbourhood of the town, and the 18th hussars, under the immediate command of Colonel Vivian, had an opportunity of making a most gallant attack upon a superior body of the enemy's cavalry, which they drove through the village of Croix d'Orade, and took about one hundred prisoners, and gave us possession of an important bridge over the river Ers, by which it was necessary to pass, in order to attack the enemy's position. Colonel Vivian was unfortunately wounded upon this occasion, and I am afraid that I shall lose the benefit of his assistance for some time.

The town of Toulouse is surrounded on three sides by the canal of Languedoc and the Garonne, on the left of that river, the suburb which the enemy had fortified with strong field works in front of the ancient wall, formed a good tête-de-pont. They had likewise formed a tête-de-pont at each bridge of the canal, which was besides defended by the fire in some places of musquetry, and in all of artillery from the ancient wall of the town. Beyond the canal to the eastward, and between that and the river Ers, is a height which extends as far as Montaudrait, and over which pass all the roads to the canal and town from the eastward, which it defends; and the enemy in addition to the tête-de-pont on the bridges of the canal, had fortified the height with five redoubts, connected by lines of

intrenchments, and had with extraordinary diligence made every preparation for defence. They had likewise broken all the bridges over the Ers within our reach, by which the right of their position could be approached. The roads, however, from the Ariege to Toulouse being impracticable for cavalry or artillery, and nearly so for infantry, as reported to your Lordship in my dispatch of the 1st instant, I had no alternative, excepting to attack the enemy in this formidable position.

It was necessary to move the Pontoon Bridge higher up the Garonne, in order to shorten the communication with Lieutenant-General Sir Rowland Hill's corps, as soon as the Spanish corps had passed; and this operation was not affected till so late an hour on the 9th, as to induce me to defer the attack till the following morning.

The plan according to which I determined to attack the enemy, was for Marshal Sir William Beresford, who was on the right of the Ers with the 4th and 6th divisions, to cross that river at the Bridge of Croix d'Orade, to gain possession of Montblanc, and to march up the left of the Ers to turn the enemy's right, while Lieutenant-General Don Manuel Freyre, with the Spanish corps under his command, supported by the British cavalry, should attack the front. Lieutenant-General Sir Stapleton Cotton was to follow the Marshal's movement, with Major-General Lord Edward Somerset's brigade of hussars; and Colonel Vivian's brigade, under the command of Colonel Arentschild, was to observe the movement of the enemy's cavalry on both banks of the Ers beyond our left.

The 3d and light divisions, under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton and Major-General Charles Baron Alten, and the brigade of German cavalry were to observe the enemy on the lower part of the canal, and to draw their attention to that quarter by threatening the tête de pont, while Lieutenant-General Sir Rowland Hill was to do the same on the suburb on the left of the Garonne.

Marshal Sir William Beresford crossed the Ers, and formed his corps in three columns of lines in the village of Croix d'Orade, the 4th division leading, with which he immediately carried Montblanc. He then moved up the Ers in the same order, over most difficult ground, in a direction parallel to the