

der, where they should disembark, and join the army of the left, under General Blake (of which the Marquess de la Romana was to take the chief command); while the force under General Baird should proceed to Coruña, and effect a junction at some point, subsequently to be fixed upon, with 20,000 men, who for that purpose were to be detached from the British army in Portugal.

In the month of September 1808, Sir David Baird proceeded to Cork, where with his usual activity and diligence, he superintended the embarkation of that part of the force which was to proceed from Ireland; and having completed every arrangement connected with the expedition, accompanied it himself to Falmouth, at which place he found already assembled the other troops forming the whole division, amounting altogether to about 11,000 men. Not a moment was lost by Sir David, in pushing forward this force, and the whole fleet of transports were under weigh on the 8th of October, and after a favourable passage of five days, anchored at Coruña on the 13th of the same month.*

The reception which our army and its commander met with on their arrival, proved to be remarkably at variance with the expectations which had been

* Sir Walter Scott in his *Life of Napoleon*, vol. vi. p. 266, states that Sir David Baird was sent to Coruña by Sir John Moore. Sir John Moore, as we have just stated, was serving in Portugal, under Sir Harry Burrard, at the period of Sir David's appointment to the command of this division.

raised ; indeed, the descriptions which had been given, not only by the Spaniards themselves, but by persons of high rank and consideration in our service, appear to have been the most deceptive and illusory.

Lord Londonderry, speaking of the state of the Spanish population at this period, says in his narrative, (p. 144,) “ The very best spirit was said to prevail in all quarters in Spain—every Spaniard was, or disposed to be a soldier—there was therefore nothing to be apprehended by us, let us enter the country where we might. It was even asserted, that unless we made good haste, there would be nothing left for us to effect, since it seemed in the highest degree probable that, before we should be able to arrive at the scene of action, the French would be everywhere driven across the Pyrenees. Such were the cheering communications which poured in upon us, not only from the Spaniards themselves, but from some of our own functionaries ; and it was with hopes naturally elevated to the highest pitch, that we looked forward to the prospect before us.”

In a similar manner had the expectations of Sir David Baird been raised by the accounts which he had even authoritatively received. He expected that he should find every arrangement made for the reception and accommodation of his troops ; and putting faith in the accounts of the enthusiasm by which the whole nation was said to be actuated and influenced, concluded that his brave companions in arms would be hailed with rapture, not only by

the Government, but by the people, who might be expected to receive them as friends and associates in the great cause of their liberation.

The disappointment of Sir David can hardly be appreciated, when he found not only that the arrival of the English force was unexpected, but that the Junta of Galicia, then sitting in Coruña, declared its arrival to be as useless as unlooked for; that they wanted nothing but money and arms, and so far from hailing the arrival of their allies with pleasure or enthusiasm, they positively refused to sanction the disembarkation of the troops without the orders of the Central Junta, which had been established at Madrid on the very day of the arrival of the expedition at Coruña.

The character of Sir David Baird's reception, and the nature of the difficulties by which he was assailed, may be best gathered from his own correspondence with Sir John Moore, to whom on the day of his arrival he despatched the following letter :

Sir David Baird to Sir John Moore, at Lisbon.

Coruña, 13th October, 1808.

SIR,

I have the honour to report to you my arrival in the port of Coruña, in command of a division of His Majesty's forces, and to transmit, for your information, a return of the strength of the different corps of which it is composed.

My instructions from Lord Castlereagh direct me, after reporting my arrival to you, to lose no time in disembarking the troops, and, immediately on clearing the infantry

transports, to send them to Lisbon, for the purpose of receiving on board part of our force there, destined to act in this part of Spain, in conjunction with the troops from England, under your orders.

An unexpected difficulty has, however, arisen to prevent an immediate obedience to these orders, as the Junta of this province does not consider itself authorised to receive us, or to permit our disembarkation, without the previous sanction of the Supreme Government of the kingdom.

An extraordinary courier has accordingly been despatched to Madrid to obtain this permission; and I have written to Lord William Bentinck, in that city, urging him to use every effort in his power to obtain a speedy and favourable reply to our application; on receipt of which I shall lose no time in carrying my instructions into effect, &c.*

On the 15th of October, Sir David wrote again to Sir John Moore.

“ Instead of arrangements being made for our reception, as I was led to expect would be the case, the provincial government was not only unprepared to receive us, but appears disinclined to afford us any active assistance.

“ As we brought no money with us, I have been compelled to endeavour to obtain a supply, and I am in expectation of procuring five thousand pounds. I am afraid we shall find great difficulty in fulfilling that part of my instructions which relates to the purchase of horses and mules, as these appear to be extremely scarce in this province.”

General Baird, anxious as he was to equip his

* Lord W. Bentinck had been employed on a political mission at Madrid. Mr. Stuart had succeeded here at this period, but his Lordship remained in that city in communication with the Spanish government.

division for field service, for which it was immediately destined as soon as it should be permitted to land, was completely crippled in his efforts by the unexpected difficulty, not only of getting assistance, but of procuring any article whatever, without prompt payment; but even this most singular evidence of zeal and enthusiasm on the part of a people whose cause we espoused, and whose liberty and property our troops had come to protect, would have been overcome, if it had not turned out that at the very time they were refusing to part with any of the articles necessary for the equipment of the troops without payment, they declined negotiating any bills drawn by the General upon the Treasury in England.

Sir David was nevertheless indefatigable in his exertions—he fixed his residence in Coruña, and was unremitting in his representations to the Junta, who listened to them with respect and attention, and promised largely for the future, and as regularly failed in the execution of their promises; and thus it was, that in a country abounding with cattle, fresh meat could rarely be procured for the soldiers.

On the 18th of October, Sir David wrote to Lord Castlereagh, describing the state of destitution to which the army was reduced; he also applied to the Consul at Oporto, as well as to Sir John Moore.

Sir John Moore had written to Sir David, from Lisbon, on the 12th of October, the day before the

expedition under Sir David's command anchored at Coruña, as follows :—

“ I need hardly say the satisfaction it afforded me when I found that I was to have you for my colleague.

* * * * *

“ I received,” continues Sir John, “ the notification of my appointment to the command in Spain on the 6th inst. Sir Harry Burrard was directed to turn over twenty thousand infantry to me, besides two regiments of cavalry, and a proportion of artillery ; at this time no preparation had been made, nor was a single regiment equipped so as to enable it to take the field.

“ It was left to my option to march through Spain and Portugal, or to embark and join you at Corunna by sea—for many reasons I have preferred the march. There is much to do in the way of preparation ; mules must be purchased for the light baggage of officers, and for the carriage of such stores as are indispensable ; and provisions must be forwarded on the line by which the troops are to march.

“ In this country (Portugal) the roads are abominable, and the means of carriage very limited. There are many other difficulties to encounter, with which I shall not trouble you, yet in spite of them I do not despair to have the army completely equipped and passed the frontier of Portugal before the wet season sets in.

“ I mean to move upon Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo by three different roads ; when arrived there, our progress will in every respect be easier ; our march from thence will be on Burgos, and at some intermediate place, which shall afterwards be settled, our junction must be made. In the mean time, when landed, you will place the troops in the most convenient cantonments in and about Coruña, and take steps for the immediate equipment of them to take the

field. I have directed the Adjutant-General, Clinton, to send you some regulations with respect to regimental equipment, which I shall thank you to follow, besides which, you will endeavour to procure the means of carriage for the ammunition, medical, commissariat, and other stores, in such proportions as should attend a corps of your number.

“ I have not yet sufficient information to discover the points most proper for the establishment of magazines for the army when united ; you may perhaps be able to procure information on this head, which you will be good enough to communicate to me in your correspondence.

“ Let me know often the progress of your equipment ; and it will be well to put your commissary and chief officers of the Quarter-Master and Adjutant-General’s departments in communication with their respective chiefs, who are with me ; this will both be useful and save you and me much trouble.

“ It is possible that you will be pressed by General Blake, who commands the Galician army, or by some others to join them, or at least to send them some portion of the artillery or cavalry ; it may happen that some of the British officers who are attending upon the Spanish armies, may join in the request ; but this you will on no account agree to, as it is quite contrary to the wishes of the British Government, that any part of the British force should be committed partially, or act until the whole is united.

“ You will hear from me frequently ; you will have due notice of my progress when we can agree as to the period when you can commence your march from Coruña ; and as to the place of junction, Coruña will necessarily be the place for our general depôt, and you will judge the propriety of landing any and what proportion of the stores and provisions for the army, or of leaving them in the ships until wanted.

“ I find, by a letter from Lord Castlereagh, of the 30th

of September, which I received yesterday, that in a supposition of all our transports here being employed in carrying the French to France, he has ordered the transports, after landing you at Coruña, and the Spaniards at St. Andero, to proceed to Lisbon. But this is quite unnecessary; I have determined to march by land. At all events I have transports here sufficient to convey twelve or fourteen thousand men.

“ When I shall be able to get fairly under weigh, I cannot yet say, it depends so much upon commissariat arrangements, and the procuring a sufficient means of carriage; but I am shoving on the regiments partially on their respective routes.”

The rest of the letter contains a mere detail of some changes which Sir John Moore wishes to be made in the arrangements of certain regiments, but from the extract we have given will be seen the resolution which Sir John had taken to avail himself of the discretionary power confided to him, and of proceeding by land to effect the desired junction with his reinforcement. This discretionary power, however, had only reference to the infantry of his army; it was a specific instruction from England that the cavalry should at all events march by land.

Sir David Baird still remained in the most anxious suspense. Shortly after his arrival at Coruña, a fleet of transports brought a reinforcement of three regiments of hussars, and a few days afterwards appeared the Marquess de la Romana himself. Sir David heard of his arrival with great satisfaction, naturally concluding that the presence of a Spanish General of his character and eminence, would sti-

multate the proceedings of the local government, and induce it to form a better estimate of the real state of the country, and of the duties which they owed it, than they yet appeared to have made.

It is true that the Junta included some extremely intelligent men; but it was, as a body, extremely ignorant of the actual position of Spain, and lamentably deficient in energy and spirit. Instead of forming, augmenting, and improving the military force in Galicia, with a population sincerely anxious and unanimously ready to obey their call, and who might have been amply equipped from the supplies furnished by England, they consumed their time and occupied their sittings in the discussion of questions relative to civil government, in no degree whatever applicable to the existing order of things.

As the author of "Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns," says vol. ii. p. 10—

"England had furnished Spain with supplies, she had poured arms and munitions into the country with a profuse hand; but she had taken no efficacious measures for their judicious application. She exercised little influence on the counsels of the Spanish Government, and even while providing the very 'strength and sinews' of the war, her voice was seldom listened to with obedience or respect.

"Arms placed at the disposal of men swayed by petty views and local interests, were wasted and misapplied; and the supplies of money, clothing, and ammunition, so liberally afforded, became a bone of contention and of petty jealousy to the civil authorities; in fact, the provincial governors were actuated by no liberal or enlarged view of the public benefit. Supine in danger, and vain-glo-

rious in prosperity, at once untalented and unenlightened, no men could be more unfitted to direct the resources of a nation with vigour and effect."

It was the mingled supineness and vain glory, and the confidence innate in the Spanish character, that caused the neglect of all precautionary measures of defence; and while the French concentrated themselves behind the Ebro, quietly waiting there, for reinforcements, and the signal to disperse and dissipate the irregular masses, called armies, by which they were encircled, the Spaniards actually dreaded the escape of the enemy, and never condescended to doubt of their entire annihilation, if they ventured to remain. To this feeling, which seemed universal, the Marquis de la Romana himself appeared to yield. The favourite object of the Spaniards was, by interposing their armies between the French and the Pyrenees, to cut them off from the frontier, and renew the scenes of Baylen and Andugar.

In the midst of these extraordinary ideas and propositions, Sir David Baird still remained anxiously waiting the return of the courier from Madrid. The following letter he received from Sir John Moore, after a reply to his first letter of the 13th.

Lisbon, Oct. 22nd, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

The Champion arrived here yesterday, and Captain Gordon delivered to me your two letters, private and public.

I take it for granted, that the letters from Lord Castle-

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reagh and Lord William Bentinck, announcing your intended arrival, had not reached Madrid, otherwise I must suppose that no difficulty would have been opposed to your landing. I trust that before this reaches you, every facility will have been afforded to you; and from everything I have hitherto heard of the conduct of the Spaniards towards the English, I dare say that whatever the country affords in the way of cantonment and supply for the troops, will have been cheerfully given.*

We are in such want of money in this place, that it is with difficulty I have been able to spare 8000*l.* which went in the *Champion* to you this day. This sum is so inadequate to your wants, that if it had not been to show you my good will, I should not have thought it worth sending to you.

It is to be hoped that money is at this moment on its passage from England; and as it will probably call at Coruña, I beg you will not take more than is absolutely necessary for your wants, and that you will send me the rest, for I am beginning my march with very little, and if it does not come soon, in the heart of Spain we shall be in very great distress.

At present I can give you no directions beyond what I conveyed to you in my former letter. Your first object is to equip your corps, so as to make it serviceable, and I should imagine when the regiments are on shore, the officers will soon contrive to get the mules they require. You will observe that a great many are not wanted, as I want to go light; but a good many will be required for

* This was written before General Moore had discovered, by sad experience, how very erroneous the prevalent descriptions of Spanish enthusiasm and affection for the English were. These expressions of his, distinctly show how thoroughly he believed them.

other services, to carry the ammunition, medical, and commissariat stores. I should hope, for forwarding what may be necessary to place in depôt, the means may be hired in the country.

I should willingly go to you, but I have a perfect confidence that you will be able to do, without my assistance, everything that is necessary; and I have an operation to conduct in this march, which requires every attention I can pay to it.

Most of the regiments are in march; but the badness of the roads and the difficulties of subsistence, make the progress slow, and I am obliged to send the artillery, the cavalry, and a corps of infantry, under Hope, round almost by Madrid.

As I advance I shall give you notice when to move forward, and determine the place of junction: in the mean time make arrangements to enable you to advance when you are directed. It will be, of course, by the great road which, I believe, leads by Lugo to Astorga.

When the cavalry arrives, if the difficulty is great in procuring forage in that part of Galicia, they may be sent forward a little, but with positive instructions to Lord Paget, or whoever commands them, to join no Spanish army, nor to risk committing the cavalry in any shape until it joins me and the British army. It must be sent forward, if necessary, for the mere purpose of subsistence, but quite aloof from the enemy or the Spanish forces.

I hear from Captain Gordon that the 2nd battalions I had named to go, as the worst, are by no means so; but you will of course send those you yourself think least fitted for service. I take from this the 50th regiment, and the Buffs, about 1600 rank and file, so you may safely send three, if you have so many that are bad. They will form here, and can join us afterwards on service. Send with them Major-General Mackenzie, and those officers of the

staff named by his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief for the army in Portugal.

I should think you will find sufficient occupation in equipping the troops, and in preparing them for a movement; and I hope you will take steps to ensure their good conduct towards the inhabitants.

I have desired Clinton to send you the few regulations I have given with respect to baggage, &c. I send you a warrant for holding courts-martial.

I hope to hear from you soon, of your being more comfortable than when you wrote last, and that your difficulties are found less than you expected. I have my share of them here, but I shall think them all over when we are able to join.

Believe me always very faithfully,
JOHN MOORE.

On the day on which Sir John Moore wrote this letter, the courier despatched by Sir David from Coruña to Madrid returned, and Sir David wrote thus:—

Sir David Baird to Sir John Moore.

Coruña, 24th October 1808.

— The courier who was sent to Madrid on the subject of our disembarkation, returned on the 22nd instant; and another messenger arrived from that city yesterday, and brought me letters from Lord William Bentinck and Mr. Stuart. The answer of the Supreme Government to our application, as read by Mr. Frere last night, in presence of the Junta of this province, is certainly very different from what I expected. Instead of expressing any anxiety to promote our views, or dissatisfaction at the impediments thrown in our way by the Galician government, it merely *permits* us to land here in the event of it being

found impracticable to send us by sea to St. Andero ; and directs that, if a disembarkation takes place, it shall be made in detachments of two or three hundred men each, which are to be successively pushed on into Castile, without waiting for the necessary equipment of mules and horses. As the execution of this plan might bring part of my division in contact with the enemy (in the event of the Spanish armies experiencing a defeat) before a junction with you, and is in direct opposition to the instructions I received from Lord Castlereagh, and to your orders, I felt it my duty to object to it in the strongest terms, and finally to declare, that unless I was permitted to quarter the troops in this province until the necessary provision of draught cattle could be procured, I should feel myself compelled to suffer them to remain on board until I had communicated with you, and received your further orders.

At length, after a great deal of discussion and much opposition on the part of the Junta, it has been decided that we should be cantoned in the towns and villages on the two principal roads leading from this place towards Leon and Castile, until such time as the necessary equipment could be effected to enable us to take the field.

Now it was, that the jealousy and suspicion which the appearance of the British force at Coruña had in the outset excited, became most evident. Instead of pressing forward with anything like activity to carry into effect the objects of the British General, instead of manifesting any signs either of pleasure or gratitude at the arrival of their friends, the Supreme Junta at last merely *permitted* the disembarkation, if it should be found impossible to send the troops by sea to any point nearer the scene of action.

In pursuance, however, of this ungracious sanction for their landing, the troops were successively brought on shore; but even in the details, so many new difficulties were started, that Sir David Baird was actually obliged to apply to Mr. Stuart, at Madrid, for the purpose of getting a Spanish officer appointed, to carry on the necessary intercourse with the local authorities.

It became perfectly clear, as time passed away, that the Spaniards were in great doubt, anxiety, and uncertainty, as to the real intentions of the English. Eleven days had expired after the arrival of the troops off Coruña, before a single article of fresh provision could be procured for them; and as a proof that we are correct in supposing the Spaniards to have been alarmed, instead of gratified, at our proceedings, we need only state, that upon no consideration whatever would they consent to the admission of a single British soldier into Ferrol; and that their anxiety with regard to the naval arsenal there was so great, that two or three English officers who had ridden over from mere curiosity to see the place, were peremptorily refused admission, and it was reported that a detachment of Spanish troops, which was proceeding from the southern part of Galicia to join General Blake's army, was suddenly ordered to Ferrol, to secure that fortress against any sinister designs which their suspected allies might have attempted.

In a letter from Sir David Baird to Colonel Gordon, dated October 25th, we find him complaining

bitterly of the total inactivity of the provincial government, and stating to him the fact we have already mentioned, that until the 24th, he had been unable to procure an ounce of bread for the men. However, the energy and perseverance which we have before had such frequent occasions to admire in the character of Sir David, were, as usual, brought to bear upon the harassing and mortifying difficulties which presented themselves; and accordingly we find that the leading division of his column, composed of the light brigade under Brigadier-General Craufurd, was actually on its march towards Astorga on the 28th of October, six days only after the permission to land the troops had arrived at Coruña. This first movement Sir David announces in a letter to Lord Castlereagh, dated October 27th.

“ We have, indeed, procured a sufficient sum of money to pay the troops up to the 24th of this month; but the balance remaining is so small, that unless we speedily receive a considerable sum in addition, it will be impossible to proceed with our arrangements, as the Spaniards require payment in specie, not only for mules and horses, but for every article of provisions they furnish.”

“ We have hitherto been unsuccessful in our endeavours to procure draught cattle; four or five mules being all we have as yet been able to get.”

“ Notwithstanding these circumstances, three regiments will commence their march on the road towards Leon tomorrow, and will proceed as far as Lugo. They would have moved yesterday; but just as they were setting out, the person who had contracted to supply them with pro-

visions in their cantonments refused to fulfil his engagement.”

“ The rains have just set in with great violence,” &c.

The following letter from Sir John Moore describes his proceedings up to the 26th of October, on which day it is dated from Lisbon.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

My baggage leaves this, this day, and I shall follow tomorrow. I take the road by Abrantes, and shall reach Almeida about the 3rd of November, by which time the head of the division which marched by Coimbra will be approaching; that with Fraser by Abrantes will be at no great distance. I cannot say until I get to Almeida where I shall collect them, but my present intention is not to pass Salamanca until you and Hope get nearer to me. I have been obliged to send Hope with the artillery and cavalry, and a corps of infantry, round by the great road from Badajoz to Madrid; no other could be found fit for artillery. He does not go through Madrid, but turns to the left at some place short of it, which at present I do not recollect, and marches upon Epinar, from whence I can direct him where to join me.

I wish you to march on Astorga, and I should hope that by the time this reaches you, you will be equipped and ready to begin.* If not, you will move the moment you are ready, and in such divisions as the route in which you are to march can cover and supply.

The governor of the province at Coruña or at Ferrol, I

* General Craufurd's brigade, as we have already observed, was actually on the march not only before this letter of Sir John Moore's was received at Coruña, but before it was despatched from Lisbon.

take it for granted, can give you every information on this head, and will give you every aid for procuring the supplies upon your march.*

You will regulate your march as you think best. As far as Astorga you are safe enough ; beyond that we must both be guided by the movements and position of the enemy. If he continue, as at present, a good way behind the Ebro, our junction may be forward ; if not, we must make it further back. You will direct to me at Almeida, but desire your messenger to ask for me at Salamanca, or any other town through which he may pass which has British troops in it. Let me know the day you begin to move, and that in which the head will reach Astorga.

I wish you would take measures to forward to Astorga a depôt, with as little delay as possible—

Provisions, but principally beef and pork, for 20,000 men for ten days.

Camp equipage for 10,000 men.

5000 blankets.

1000 camp-kettles.

5000 haversacks and canteens.

Shoes to as great a number as you have.

With respect to medical and purveyor's stores, I have desired Dr. Shafter, the Inspector-General with me, to write upon this subject to Dr. Hogg, his deputy with you, and to him I must refer you. With respect to ammunition and ordnance stores, Colonel Harding is not at present with me, and I cannot write with the same correctness ; but I should think one hundred rounds a gun, and a hundred rounds of musket-cartridges for 20,000 men, should be forwarded in the first instance, and to be followed after-

* These are fresh proofs of the ignorance in which those who ought to have had the best information were kept with respect to the popular feeling in Spain.

wards by as much more. I mean all this for *depôt*, independent of what is carried with the army.

Colonel Harding did write pretty fully to the officer commanding the artillery with you on the subject of his equipment, by Captain Gordon, and I shall desire him to write again when I see him, which will be in a few days; but in the mean time the letter he has received, together with what I have now stated to you, will suffice for what is immediately required.

If you are in want of the means to make this *depôt*, for I have no account of what provisions or stores are sent with you, be so good as to let me know, and I will order ships round with them from this.

It can only be by means of the carts and mules of the country that you can be enabled to forward the stores to Astorga, but by demanding them of the public authorities they can be procured. Mr. Erskine, the commissary-in-chief, will write to his deputy with you on this subject. If the carts are paid for, and not taken a great distance from their homes, but relieved by others upon the road, they will not be much averse to it.

In forwarding these stores, the preference should be given to the ammunition, the provisions, the stores, medicines, and blankets. The camp equipage cannot be so pressing; of shoes we have few or none. The commissary-in-chief tells me that 50,000 pair are somewhere afloat, and we hope they are with you.

I have mentioned Astorga as the place for this *depôt*, but merely from the map, as I see it is a town upon the great road; but if from better information you should prefer Leon, or any other town in that neighbourhood, you will do it.

Coruña must be our principal magazine while we continue in the north of Spain. It is the only port, and Ferrol,

from whence a road leads into Spain. From St. Andero, or the ports in the Asturias, there are only mule-paths.

It will be necessary, therefore, to leave a small garrison in Coruña, under the command of an intelligent officer with whom we can at all times communicate, and who can aid in forwarding whatever is wanted. Any of the battalions the least fit for service may be appropriated for this; but the officer commanding at Coruña, must be active, and have certain qualities.

I know what a troublesome task I am imposing upon you, but you will see the necessity of the arrangements I propose, and you will execute them in the manner you think best for the good of the service. Our communication will now be shorter, and you will be so good as to inform me of whatever you determine. Should the heavy rains overtake you upon the march, it will be best to make a halt; they seldom last above a few days, but are tremendous, and after them there is generally a spell of fine weather.

Believe me always, my dear General,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN MOORE.

P.S. From the number of artillery horses stated in the return you sent me, you will not be able to horse more than three brigades: it will be best not to bring any more than you can fully horse and man. What other artillery you have, will do to replace hereafter. I have not said anything of the cavalry in this letter. I know not whether they are arrived; but as you will regulate your march as you think best, you will of course send them first or last at your pleasure.

J. M.

It fortunately happened about this period, that Mr. Frere, who had been appointed Minister Pleni-

potentiary from the Court of St. James's to Madrid, arrived at Coruña, on his way to that city, bringing with him a very considerable sum of money, which had been transmitted as a donation from the Government of England to that of Spain.

It must be admitted that nothing could appear more extraordinary than that, at the very moment when the British generals, (for, as we have seen, Sir John Moore was suffering from the want of funds as well as Sir David Baird,) found the absolutely necessary preparations for equipping the army obstructed by their poverty, large amounts of specie were periodically shipped from England, to meet the insatiable demands of the Spanish authorities.

The supply brought by Mr. Frere was for the Central Government at Madrid; how much it was subsequently misapplied, subsequent events too clearly show; however, at the urgent solicitation of Sir David Baird, Mr. Frere spared him 40,000*l.* as a loan for the use of the British army, and thus, rather by the personal consideration of Mr. Frere than the care of the Government at home, his wants were temporarily relieved.

Notwithstanding these checks, we have already seen the fruits of Sir David's activity in the march of General Craufurd's brigade on the 28th of October. The reader will, perhaps, not be surprised to find that the same energetic efforts were continued with an indefatigable constancy; and that on the 3rd of November, the whole division, with the exception of a battalion of the 60th foot, which was left in gar-

rison at Coruña, were in motion. The brigade of guards, under General Warde, being sent, in the first instance, to St. Jago, the entire force comprised a body of nearly 2000 cavalry and about 11,000 infantry, with six brigades of guns.

The cavalry, consisting of the 7th, 10th, and 15th hussars, were in the highest possible condition ; and the infantry, being almost all first battalions of regiments, was in the best order. All they wanted was that practical knowledge of the art of war, which of course can only be acquired by experience in the field, and of which, before the glorious campaigns of the Peninsula were over, they had innumerable opportunities of gaining, and by which, it must be allowed on all hands, they profited most completely.

In a letter to Sir John Moore from Sir David Baird, dated Coruña, 3rd November 1808, in reply to that which we submitted to the reader a page or two back, he says :—

“ All the regiments of my division (with the exception of the third battalion 60th) are now on shore, and moving slowly towards Astorga. I cannot at this moment positively fix the day when my advance will reach that place, but I trust nothing will, at all events, occur to delay it beyond the 13th of this month.”

The following passage in this letter is remarkable :

“ In the mean time measures are concerting for the establishment of a depôt ; and the first division of waggons with provisions left Coruña for Astorga this morning. From all the information I have been able to collect, that

town is a very proper place for the establishment of a magazine. *The only doubt I entertain respecting it is, whether it may not be rather too far advanced.*"

The wisdom of this doubt future events singularly and unfortunately confirmed; for Colonel Napier in his work, (p. 470,) speaking of the retreat, to which we must hereafter come, through Astorga, says,—

“ In the preceding month, large stores had been gradually brought up to that town by Sir David Baird, and as there were no means of transport to remove them, orders were given, after supplying the immediate wants of the army, to destroy them; but Romana, who would neither defend Leon nor Mansilla, had, contrary to his promises, preoccupied Astorga with his fugitive army; and when the English division marched in, such a tumult and confusion arose, that no orders could be executed with regularity, no distribution be made, nor the destruction of the stores be effected.”

We have already shown, by submitting Sir John Moore's letter of the 26th of October, that Sir David Baird merely obeyed the orders of that officer.

To Sir David Baird's letter of the 3rd of November, Sir John Moore despatched the following answer:

Ciudad Rodrigo, 11th November 1808.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

I had the pleasure, on my road to this place, to receive your letter of the 3rd instant. I have not been able, from different causes, to get on so fast as I intended, and only reached this to-day. I proceed to-morrow, and shall be at

Salamanca on the 13th, about which time the heads of Beresford's and Fraser's divisions will be showing themselves. They have all passed Almeida. Paget's first regiment arrives here on the 13th. I shall assemble the whole at Salamanca.

The French have got considerable reinforcements, 27,000; and the Spaniards are less numerous than was thought. A considerable alarm is excited, and it becomes particularly necessary that we should get together as soon as possible.

Bathurst's letter to Colonel Murray states the troops which will be at Astorga on the 15th, and where others will be on the same day; but it does not appear from his letter whether those which are short of Astorga halt, or continue their march till they get there—we suppose the latter.

I should wish to proceed from Astorga to Benevente in as large corps as can be conveniently covered, taking care, first, that provisions are ready for them. On my arrival at Salamanca I shall take steps to have them prepared; in the mean time you will advance all the rear corps to Astorga as fast as can be with convenience to the troops, and from Astorga on Benevente by corps of such numbers as can be covered, as soon as supplies can be provided for them.

Thus half of your corps might be at Benevente and half at Astorga; I should then have it in my power to bring on those from Benevente, if circumstances made it necessary, when the other half from Astorga would in that case follow.

You must be guided in all your movements by what you hear of the enemy. If they continue beyond the Ebro, you may safely send on the troops as above detailed; but if they pass it, you must be more cautious. If the cavalry are arrived, bring them on amongst the first.

When the troops pass Astorga, *means must be prepared to bring on the depôt.* On this I can write hereafter.

I forward a letter from Colonel Harding to Colonel Sheldrake, which is quite explicit as to artillery stores, &c. I should wish the blankets to be brought on with the first stores, or as soon after as can be.

Your arrangement about artillery horses is perfectly good, and the sum given to the officers for the purchase of others for themselves is quite proper. Kennedy's appointment shall be confirmed: and hiring the mules I believe, for many reasons, preferable to purchasing them. Continue to write home, by every opportunity, for money and shoes. Major-General Mackenzie must go to Lisbon. I am sorry for it; but he is placed by the Duke on that staff, and cannot, therefore, be employed on this.

Believe me always, my dear General, faithfully,

JOHN MOORE.

It seems quite clear by the tone of his letter, that General Moore began to see difficulties thickening round him. His anxiety for the junction with Baird—his evident disappointment at the inefficiency of the Spanish troops—are all indications of the new and true light which was breaking upon him; while the experience he had gained in that part of his march which he had achieved, to Ciudad Rodrigo, no doubt disabused his mind of the erroneous description he had received of the state of the roads, the reported badness of which, had induced him as has already been stated, to divide his force, and march upon Salamanca by three routes instead of one.

A corps of 6000 men, under the command of Lieutenant-General Hope, marched through the

Alenteijo by the route of Badajos, Merida, Truxillo, Talavera, and the Escorial.

Two brigades under General Beresford marched by Coimbra and Almeida ; and three brigades under Lieutenant-General Fraser, marched by Abrantes, and so to Almeida ; and with them a brigade of light six-pounders was ordered to the latter place. However unimpeachable his motives may be, it is clear that, besides dividing his force at a time when he was not exactly certain of the position or strength of the enemy, Sir John Moore naturally delayed its junction with Baird's division by this arrangement. Probably these considerations, added to the report of the important reinforcements of the French army, gave a tone to the letter we have just submitted, which is anything but exhilarating or confident.

Nor was General Baird less anxious to join Sir John Moore, than Sir John himself could be that he should do so ; and his reasons for this anxiety, no particle of which was founded on selfishness, will be considered tolerably strong, when the reader is told, or recollects, that from letters and other papers which had fallen into his hands, he had obtained information that the reinforcements which the French were to receive before the 10th of the month, would amount, instead of 27,000 men, as Sir John Moore had stated it, to no less a force than 78,000.

Sir David wrote to Mr. Frere, to enforce the necessity of having a Spanish commissioner with the

British forces. The Galician Junta afforded him no assistance; the necessity for the junction with Moore became alarmingly evident: but all the representations of our General had no effect upon the authorities at Coruña, nor did the despatch containing the details of the defeat of General Blake, addressed to themselves, produce any more powerful sensation; they seemed to be in a state of infatuation, stupified by an overweening confidence in themselves, and a striking absence of it in the English.

Sir David, however, wrote to Sir John Moore, to report progress; the state of affairs may easily be judged by his own letters.

He wrote to Sir John on the 7th of November:

“ — The troops continue their route towards Astorga. The first division will arrive there (if no unlooked for accident should delay it), on the 13th; and by the 19th I expect we shall have seven regiments in that town, and in its immediate neighbourhood. We are also forwarding provisions and ammunition as quickly as our circumscribed means will permit. We have derived no sort of assistance from the government. The Junta have repeatedly promised us carts, but have invariably failed in sending them; and we have been compelled to rely solely on our own efforts to obtain the means of conveyance,” &c.

“ — The first division of carts with provisions will reach Astorga about the 18th instant, and every exertion shall be made to complete the depôt you propose establishing there. I think, however, it may become a question (which you will hereafter be able to decide), whether it may not be advisable that a principal magazine should be formed further back, and in rear of the defiles leading from Ga-

licia into Leon. I transmit copies of some letters and other documents respecting the state and proceedings of the Spanish armies, and the reinforcements which have arrived, or are expected by the French, in Navarre and Biscay; by which it appears that the enemy in those two provinces only, will receive an accession to his force of 78,000 men by the 10th instant.

“ — It is my intention to leave Coruña about the 10th or 12th instant for Astorga,” &c.

On the 12th of November, Sir John Moore writes to Sir David Baird from Ciudad Rodrigo, the following letter :

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

Just as I had despatched a courier to you last night, your aide-de-camp Captain Gordon arrived. I am glad you are making such progress. I have letters this morning from Madrid, which state that an officer is sent from Madrid to attend your corps on its march, and provide for its wants; and this gentleman will, I should hope, remove the difficulties made by the political and other parties, as he is charged with full power from the Spanish Government.

An officer of like description is with Hope. You will see by my letter of last night, that I was aware of the intelligence sent to you of the French reinforcements—we shall have enough to do. I wish we were once united, and that our commissariat knew how to feed us, and that the Spaniards were more firm and decided; for whilst at Madrid they are wrangling, and all the Generals are separate and independent, we can look to nothing but disasters, if the French are once in sufficient force to move forward. However, we must hope and do for the best.

Q 2

Sir Harry Burrard is ordered to England immediately to attend at the intended investigation of Sir H. Dalrymple. Burrard is an excellent man, honourable, and liberal. I shall be exceedingly sorry, if anything unpleasant ever befall him. He does not deserve it. I enclose a letter from him to Major-General Mackenzie, who must immediately make the best of his way to Lisbon.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN MOORE.

The next day to that on which this letter was written, the intelligence reached Sir John Moore which he had so long anticipated with so much gloom and apprehension. The French were in sufficient force to advance, and did advance, as the following extract from another despatch to Sir David Baird, dated Salamanca, November 13th, will sufficiently explain.

Sir John Moore to Sir David Baird.

“ Salamanca, 13th November, 1808.

“ — The French have entered Burgos, and have driven from it part of the Estremaduran army. In what force they are, or whether their intention is to advance farther, I know not. If they advance whilst we are assembling, they will embarrass us. I do not understand the movements of the Spanish Generals: they are separated without the possibility of aiding each other, the one in Biscay, the other on the Alagon, leaving the whole country in our front, whilst we are collecting, to the enemy. I have addressed Castafios to know his views, when I shall be better able to decide what step to take. In the mean time, the great object for us is to unite. I wish, as soon as you have ascertained that they can be subsisted, that you would

push on your corps to Benevente. I shall probably, by the time they reach that, order them to continue on to Zamora, and ultimately we may be able to have the whole assembled in Zamora, Toro, and this place. •

“ — In all this, however, you must be guided by the information you receive of the enemy. Were they to advance immediately, whilst the regiments on this side were moving forward in succession, I should have no option but to fall back, in which case also you must get back to Astorga, and prepare, if pressed, to get back into Galicia. From the account I have of the road, this to you would not be difficult. If once all my regiments were assembled here, probably, rather than separate you, I would by a flank march join you ; in short, we can only be regulated by circumstances, and we should be in constant communication.

“ I still think that the probability is, that the French are not in force to advance beyond Burgos, while such strong corps as Blake's and Castaños' are on their flanks — the one of 40,000, the other 50,000 men. If we were once together, I should not care, and had two or three days to organize and arrange ourselves ; but whilst collecting, it is distressing.

“ We soldiers must do the best, and hope for the best ; there is no use in dwelling upon evils which may, but which perhaps never will occur.”

On the 16th of November Sir John writes :

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

In the night of yesterday, I was informed that the French had entered Valladolid on the 13th. This morning the post from Valladolid did not arrive, and the report of the French being there is confirmed. Their force is not stated ; but as it is to be presumed that a small force durst

not have ventured so far, *I am preparing to retire upon Ciudad Rodrigo*, in order to concentrate my force, which is now marching on, and from that place to this, two regiments came in here yesterday, and two are coming in to-day; the whole will not be here before the 25th.

Under such circumstances, I have no option but to fall back upon Ciudad Rodrigo; my motions afterwards will depend on circumstances. I expect hourly intelligence of the movements of the enemy.

I shall not quit this place till I find they are marching on it; in the mean time I keep every thing.

You must of course not separate your force, by sending any part of it towards this, until you find that the enemy have retired from Valladolid, and that I continue here; in short, you must now look to yourself—be ready to fall back if necessary on Coruña, or take such steps as circumstances direct. You shall hear from me daily, as long as I am here, and as the communication is open. I can after that, communicate with you through Portugal.

The event has happened which I always said was a possible one; but as it was the very worst that could befall us, I was in hopes our good fortune would have saved us from it. There is no help for it—we have done what we could, to join, and be of use to this nation; if we have not succeeded, it is their fault, not ours. We had a right to expect that they would have been able to cover us until united.

My dear Sir David, yours faithfully,

JOHN MOORE.

The next day Sir John Moore wrote again.

Salamanca, 16th November.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

I expect in the course of this day, accurate information of the movement of the French from Burgos; it does not

appear that they have been at Valladolid in any number, and certainly, I believe, they have not yet been beyond it. In the present circumstances, I think you should collect your whole force at Astorga, and its neighbourhood: by means of your cavalry you can keep a good look out, and by other means you can be informed of every movement the enemy makes towards you; and at the same time that you keep your corps in readiness to join me when I desire it, you must prepare to retreat on Coruña should circumstances render it necessary. Of these last circumstances, you alone must be the judge.

You must retire rather than commit in any degree the safety of your corps—it is when united, we can alone do good; not by fighting separately partial actions, if they can be avoided.

Castaños has been superseded, and the Marquis of Romana appointed in his place, to command the armies of the centre and the left. I shall be guided by what I hear of his intentions, as well as by the movements which I perceive the enemy to make, in the order I shall send you to join me; in the mean time, I expect to hear from you your progress, and whatever comes to your knowledge of transactions on your side.

Buonaparte is come himself, and his army amounts to 80,000 men—if we can unite, we shall, I hope, do our duty.

Believe me faithfully,

JOHN MOORE.

On the 17th, the next day, Sir John Moore again wrote to Sir David Baird as follows.

Salamanca, November 17th, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

Last night an officer I had sent out for information returned—he was in Valladolid. All the inhabitants—the

magistrates, and fifty or sixty people excepted--had abandoned it on the arrival of the French, who entered the town on Sunday afternoon, the 13th instant, with a thousand cavalry and two pieces.

They stayed the night, plundered some of the houses, and then retired to Valencia, on the road to Burgos; whether they are still at Valencia, he could not find out; but I shall know this to-day. No infantry seems to have advanced from Burgos; but Marshal Bessieres commands there a body of 14,000 men.

Colonel Murray received a letter this morning from Colonel Craufurd at Astorga, by which I am sorry to find that no part of his brigade is equipped, and he seems to be looking forward to some quiet cantonment, where all this will be done at leisure. I was in hopes that you would have done as we have done, start with as much equipment as you could, and complete it by every means as you went on; by this means a little is procured from every district, and the country where we stop ultimately, will easily provide for the final wants of the whole; but affairs are in that state that we must not look forward to halting any time anywhere.

My wish is, if possible, to assemble the army between Zamora and this place. I hope the enemy is not yet prepared to disturb us; but in coming to me, you must use your discretion, and act upon the information you receive of his movements. I shall let you know all I hear, that can be of any use to you. By the time you receive this, you will perhaps be prepared to forward to Benevente a considerable part of your force; let it march in as large bodies as can be covered, and include a proportion of artillery and of cavalry, if any of the latter are come up.

Whilst this is doing, the rest of your corps will be collecting at Astorga, and as it moves forward to Benevente,

that already there, may advance to Zamora, at which place there is cover for a great many men, and before they can reach it Colonel Murray will have prepared the cantonment for the whole of your corps, in the manner it may be proposed to take it up.

The artillery, stores, ammunition, blankets, &c. as mentioned in my former letter, you will forward to Zamora, at such intervals and in such manner as you judge best; and you will leave directions with each corps or officers, as may be judged expedient, to remain for a time at Astorga, with respect to the second division of artillery, stores, and ammunition, which may perhaps not have reached it at the time the rest of the troops move forward.

In short, my dear General, consider yourself as coming to me with a complete division of the army. The things which should attend it, have at different times been explained; others have been left to your own judgment and discretion, and I look to you to manage the whole in such manner as you think best, and as circumstances will admit. As we approach nearer, our communication becomes shorter, and may be as frequent as we please; and the heads of your departments writing to their chiefs with me, may get every information and instruction. By sending forward proper officers, every necessary supply will be provided.

A letter from Colonel Murray to Colonel Bathurst, accompanies this. With respect to equipment, the mules for regimental purposes, viz. officers' baggage, camp kettles, &c. should be bought, and if Spanish muleteers, as Batmen, are hired, one would be sufficient for the care of the mules of a company, and employ fewer soldiers; the mules required for the departments it will be best to hire.

Believe me faithfully,

JOHN MOORE.

To Sir David Baird.

These letters, which are extremely curious and interesting, as exhibiting the unsettled and conflicting feelings of Sir John Moore's mind at a moment of infinite embarrassment, were all received by Sir David Baird on the road from Coruña to Astorga; the former place he quitted on the 13th of November, and after inspecting the different corps which he passed on their march, reached Astorga late on the night of the 19th of that month.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUATION OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR JOHN MOORE—OBSERVATIONS ON SIR WALTER SCOTT'S LIFE OF NAPOLEON AND COLONEL NAPIER'S WORK—COLONEL SOBELL'S NOTES—SIR DAVID BAIRD VISITS LEON—INTERVIEW WITH ROMANA—GENERAL MOORE RESOLVES ON RETREATING—DEFEAT OF CASTANOS—REMONSTRANCE OF ROMANA—LORD LONDONDERRY'S INTERVIEW WITH SIR JOHN MOORE—MR. FRERE'S LETTER—RETREAT COMMENCED.

THE moment Sir David Baird reached Astorga, on the night of Saturday the 19th of November, he sat down to reply to the four letters which we have just submitted.

Sir David in his despatch says :

In addition to the information you communicate respecting the movement of French troops, I have received positive intelligence that the army of General Blake, after sustaining repeated attacks, has been completely defeated, and almost entirely dispersed. The General himself, with the very small portion of his force which he was able to keep together, has retired to the mountains bordering on the Asturias; and it appears that a few of the fugitives and some artillery are collecting at Leon, which is threatened by the enemy.

I enclose copies of some reports which have been addressed to Colonel Craufurd and myself upon the subject.

Under these circumstances, I confess I am of opinion, that it would be attended with much danger if I were to make any partial advance on Benevente, until some cavalry has come up, and a considerable portion of my force is collected; as it would be easy for the enemy, if they are in strength, to intercept and cut off the communication between my advanced corps and the rest. By the 28th or 29th, we shall have at this place at least one regiment of dragoons, the horse artillery, three brigades of six-pounders, and the greater part of my infantry; and I should then be in sufficient force to advance with some degree of security.

Should you, however, be desirous that I should move forward with what troops I have at present here, I will instantly do so; and I beg to assure you, my dear Sir John, that in every instance, and on every occasion, it will be my most anxious desire to meet your wishes and views.

In pursuance of the advice and directions in your letter of the 15th, I am making arrangements to secure my retreat on Galicia, should such a measure unfortunately become indispensable. Coruña would be a bad point to retire on, as the harbour is completely commanded from the surrounding heights. I have sent directions to have Vigo and the neighbouring sea-ports examined, and I expect reports on the subject very soon.

Every possible effort has been made to complete the equipment of the division, but owing to the total want of assistance which we experienced in Galicia from the local authorities, and which I have had repeated occasion to notice to you, our success has not been great. In this province I hope, however, to be more successful, and that we shall very speedily be able to collect the number of horses and mules we require.

It must be admitted that the position in which Sir

John Moore at this moment found himself, was one of considerable difficulty. When the English Government sent a British force into Spain, that force was intended to co-operate with the native armies, to which it was to become a *point d'appui*, or reserve; and it was hoped and expected, that those armies would not be committed in any imprudent contest with the enemy, until their allies were collected, and that they had effected a junction with them.

By what had occurred, however, the original design of the campaign, and the mode of prosecuting the war were entirely deranged before even the British troops themselves could be collected together; for from the ease with which it appeared that the army of Blake had been defeated by the French, it was naturally to be concluded that those under Castaños and Palafox would be overcome with similar facility; yet Sir John still anxiously looked forward to the union of the British forces, and to the arrival of General Hope's division, which the reader will recollect Sir John had been induced to send by a circuitous route on account of the alleged badness of the roads; we say alleged, for the descriptions which he had received of the difficulties of moving artillery by the same route which the infantry had taken, proved in the sequel to have been grossly if not purposely exaggerated.

On the 21st Sir John wrote to Sir David Baird from Salamanca.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

As I was sending off an officer to you with the enclosed,* your letter of the 19th arrived. My wish all along was, and still is, that you should use your entire discretion in obeying whatever orders I send you; and I shall only feel comfortable in proportion as I am assured that you will do so. Do not therefore advance a man from Astorga until you think it safe to do so.

When you are ready you will apprise me, and I shall move a corps from this to Zamora, and shall probably go with it myself; but if the French, in consequence of Blake's defeat, turn a force against you, we must give up the junction, and you must retreat and re-embark. In this it would be well to send the cavalry, for which no ships will be found, through Portugal to Lisbon, from whence they might join me, and you yourself, with the troops, sail for that port, at which place I should write to you for your further proceedings.

Upon your retreat I should like to take the best care of myself I could. If Villa Franca is preferable for a depôt, establish it there. Bring on to Astorga only what is necessary to accompany the army. Salt provisions, when once you are at Astorga, will probably not again be wanted, therefore your consuming a part of what is coming forward is of no importance.

It does not appear from the information we have here, and I believe it is pretty correct, that the French have been in Valladolid, or in front of Valencia, since the 14th. On leaving Valladolid on that morning, they took the road to Leon, but after following it a few miles they turned to Valencia. They were 1000 cavalry, with two pieces of artillery.

* A duplicate of Sir John's letter of the 17th, to which at that moment he had not received Sir David's answer.

The country has been thrown into such a state of alarm in consequence of the late defeats, that rumours are spread of French parties much more numerous than they are; no doubt, however, we must pay attention to rumours in our present comparatively defenceless situation, and act with much circumspection. I beg you will continue to let me hear from you everything you think of the least importance, and apprise me of all your movements.

I doubt if you will find a better place than Coruña for a re-embarkation, should you be reduced to such an alternative; the probability is, that you will be closely followed through that mountainous country; but Vigo, I suspect, is quite open."

It will be seen, that still up to the 21st of November Sir John Moore had not given up all his hopes. On that day Sir David Baird wrote him a letter, from which the following is an extract :

" — I enclose a letter I received late last night from General Leith, communicating the entire defeat and dispersion of Blake's army, and a report from Captain Pasley of the Royal Engineers, upon the same subject. From that army I can now expect no assistance or support. A number of fugitives from that and the Estremaduran corps, entirely destitute of order and without proper officers, have, I understand, entered Leon, and joined a small party already in that city. The whole may amount to about 150 cavalry and 2000 or 3000 infantry; and they have some artillery and thirty-four pieces of ordnance belonging to Blake's army in that town. The commanding officer of the artillery came here last night, and proposed joining me with his guns, which I directed him to do, as there is no chance of Leon being successfully defended if the enemy advances in any force. I have also ordered the cavalry to

join me as speedily as possible, as they may prove of great service in reconnoitring, &c. until such time as our own dragoons come up.

“ — In my last letter of the 19th, I pointed out, that as far as I was then able to judge, it would not be advisable to make any partial advance of the troops at present here, until such time as part of the cavalry, the ammunition, and the money, were come up; and until we were able to procure some positive information respecting the movements and views of the enemy, who in addition to Bessieres' force, (stated at 14,000 or 15,000,) which advances by the road to Burgos, have now the army that defeated Blake unoccupied.

“ By the 29th I expect to have the greater part of my infantry, with one regiment of cavalry and a troop of horse-artillery, in the neighbourhood, and I should then be able to move with greater confidence and security, if not previously compelled to fall back by the advance of a superior force of the enemy. Should I at present advance to Benevente, and the French approach, a retreat would become very difficult for infantry through an open country and in face of a powerful cavalry.

“ I must, however, repeat, that if you are desirous that I should immediately advance what troops are here, I shall instantly do so, although I think such a measure might be attended with considerable danger, as, in addition to our want of cavalry, we are at this moment *destitute of spare ammunition*, which, from Colonel Murray's letter to Bathurst, *appears also to be the case with your force*.

“ I have caused persons to be sent forward by Leon, and on the road to Palencia, to obtain information, and I shall not fail to communicate the result of their observations to you. I enclose two reports, which reached me this morning. I have also despatched engineer officers to the rear, for the purpose of ascertaining what impediments to the

progress of the enemy we might occasion by the destruction of the bridges, &c. in the event of being hard pressed, and compelled to fall back on Galicia.”

At this point the correspondence between Sir John Moore and Sir David Baird assumes a peculiar degree of interest, as throwing a strong light upon certain passages contained in two works of acknowledged talent and authority—Sir Walter Scott’s *Life of Buonaparte*, and Colonel Napier’s *History of the War in the Peninsula*.

With a view of correcting some errors into which both the historians of these times have evidently fallen, Lieutenant Colonel Sorrell, who was military secretary and aide-de-camp to Sir David Baird during the campaign (and to whose kindness and ability the writer of this narrative is highly indebted for much valuable information), published in 1828 a pamphlet, called “Notes on the Campaign of 1808-9 in the North of Spain,” for the purpose of showing—

1st. That every effort was made to prepare the division when landed at Coruña, for the field, and to effect its junction with that under Sir John Moore.

2nd. That Sir David Baird did not, as stated by Lieutenant-colonel Napier in his *History of the War in Portugal*, return from Astorga to Villa Franca until ordered to do so by Sir John Moore.

And 3rd. That the disorder and irregularity which attended the retreat, ought principally to be ascribed to the fatigues and privations which the army underwent, and not to any want of exertion on the part of the officers in command.

In thus professing the intention and object of his "Notes," Colonel Sorrell disclaims "the slightest intention to detract from the general merits of the works to which he has occasion to refer, but is solely actuated by considerations of public justice and private friendship."

We have already noticed the error of Sir Walter Scott, who states, vol. vi. p. 266, that Sir David Baird was despatched to Coruña by Sir John Moore, and we now extract from Colonel Sorrell's "Notes" the following observations upon the letter of Sir David Baird just submitted to the reader.

"And yet," says Colonel Sorrell (note, p. 20), "Sir Walter Scott, in his *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, volume vi. p. 275, states 'a retreat into, if not through Galicia, was the only mode of avoiding the perils by which the British were surrounded. The plan of defending this strong and mountainous province, or at least of effecting a retreat through it with order and deliberation, had been in view for several weeks. Sir David Baird's division had passed through it on their advance to Astorga; yet so imperfect at that time was the British general staff, that no accurate knowledge seemed to have been possessed of the roads through the country, of the many strong military positions which it presents, or of the particular military advantages which it affords for defensive war.'

"The reasons," continues Colonel Sorrell, "which led Sir David Baird to think it would be injudicious to advance farther than Astorga before the 29th of November, have already been shown by his letters. Until that day he would not have sufficient force up to enable him to move with security, as the country between Astorga and Benevente is an open plain, and he was without cavalry.

Colonel Napier says, p. 481, that the movement which Sir John Moore contemplated in case he could draw the wings of his army together in good time, was to abandon all communication with Portugal, and throwing himself into the heart of Spain, to rally Castaños' army (if it yet existed) upon his own; to defend the southern provinces, and trust to the effect which such an appeal to the patriotism and courage of the Spaniards would produce.

"This," says Colonel Sorrell, "I think must be a mistake; we shall presently see what Sir John Moore himself says upon the subject; at all events, it is more certain that any movement at the moment alluded to, which would have caused us to abandon all communication with Portugal and Galicia (and this would have been a necessary consequence of throwing ourselves into the heart of Spain), must inevitably have been followed by the ruin of the British army.

"A considerable portion of Sir David Baird's division was still in the rear. The whole of Sir John Moore's force was not yet collected; but what was of still more importance, both divisions were *deficient in ammunition*, as appears by Sir David Baird's letter to Sir John Moore, dated the 21st."

The position of Sir John Moore at this crisis is ably described by the author of "Annals of the Peninsula Campaigns," vol. ii. p. 6.

"The situation of Sir John Moore at Salamanca, with respect to the Spanish, was very extraordinary. He was at the vertex of a triangle, the base of which, at the distance of between two hundred and fifty and three hundred miles, was the French position; the points of the extremities at the base, that is, the French flanks, were the positions of the Spanish armies.

“The army of Castaños was at this period posted in the neighbourhood of Tudela, but on the opposite or north side of the Ebro, and about three hundred miles to the north-east of Salamanca. The French were thus completely interposed between the Spanish and British armies, and might at any moment advance on the latter in overwhelming force. For this state of things Sir John Moore was unprepared: all his arrangements had been framed on the assurance that the assembling of his forces would be protected by the Spanish armies. To effect the union of his isolated divisions, had now become an operation of danger and difficulty. He was placed as a central point between the two wings of his army, and found it impracticable to approach the one without hazarding the safety of the other.

“Thus compelled to remain inactive at Salamanca, Sir John Moore endeavoured to stimulate the local authorities into the adoption of such measures of promptitude and vigour as were suited to the exigence of the crisis. In this effort he failed. The Spanish people, though influenced by fierce and unmitigated hatred towards their invaders, were no longer animated by that uncalculating and convulsive energy which in the commencement of the struggle had goaded them like madness into furious resistance; the fierceness of the paroxysm had passed, and though in the cause of their country every Spaniard was prepared to grasp the sword, the blows it dealt were directed with an erring aim and a feeble arm; their detestation of a foreign yoke was undiminished, but it had become a fixed and inert sentiment, rather than a fierce uncontrollable and all-pervading impulse.”

The policy of the plan supposed by Colonel Napier to have been that of Sir John Moore, it is now useless to discuss. That it could never have been

executed, was rendered certain by the entire defeat of the army under Castaños, which he proposed to join at Tudela on the 20th, the very day on which Sir David Baird wrote the following letter to Sir John Moore.

Astorga, 23rd November, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

I wrote to you on the 19th and 21st from this place, explaining the nature of our situation; and was in hopes I should have had the satisfaction of hearing from you in reply to my first communication, before this. The length of time which has elapsed since I despatched that letter, makes me apprehensive that you may have felt it expedient to fall back on Ciudad Rodrigo, or that our communication may be intercepted.

The more I consider our situation, the more I am convinced of the danger that would attend my making, at the present moment, any movement in advance, or attempt to join you, before my force is more collected. We have no kind of support to expect from the Spaniards, who are completely dispersed, and driven from the field; and if I were to move forward the infantry I have at present here, I should necessarily expose myself to be beaten in detail, without a chance of being able to oppose any effectual resistance.

The enemy are certainly at Mayorga, and their parties have pushed forward almost close to Beneventé. From my present want of cavalry, I have not been able to ascertain how forward their infantry may be.

— I enclose a copy of some intelligence communicated by a person who was sent from Leon to obtain information respecting the movements of the French, and of a letter written by Colonel Graham from the head-quarters of Castaños' army.

From the latter, it is clearly apparent how very much exaggerated the accounts generally circulated of the strength of the Spanish armies have been. In all probability, Castaños and Palafox *may by this time have experienced a reverse similar to that of Blake*, in which case the Spaniards would have no force deserving the name of an army in the field.

The last paragraph of this letter is singularly prophetic, for at the moment Sir David Baird was writing it, the extermination of Castanos' force was actually going on.

The Marquis de la Romana was at this period at Leon, and in constant communication with Sir David, whose anxiety with respect to Sir John Moore was very much augmented by the fact that he had not heard from him for several days. He began to apprehend that Sir John might have been compelled to retire, and accordingly made all his arrangements for falling back on Galicia, communicating his intentions to do so, both to Sir John Moore and Lord Castlereagh.

At the same time he wrote to apprise the Marquis de la Romana of his plan of proceeding in case either of the retreat of Sir John Moore or the advance of the enemy in force upon Astorga, and recommended him, supposing such a movement necessary, to fall back on the Asturias.

The following letter, which Sir David received from Sir John Moore, rendered these measures for the present unnecessary.

Salamanca, 26th Nov. 1808.

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

I had the pleasure to receive your letters of the 23rd and 24th yesterday.

I do not believe that yet the enemy has any considerable corps at Rio Seco or Ampudia; my information is very incorrect if they have any infantry so near. For some days past they have had 800 or 900 cavalry in Valladolid, and have patrolled as far as Tordesillas and Puente de Duero; but as yet, I hear, nothing but cavalry. All your precautions are perfectly good. I have explained myself to you already so fully, that I need say no more. Whatever you do, I am certain will be right, and I shall approve. Give me notice that I may conform.

You will of course keep Major-Gen. Leith with you, and if you can spare Mackenzie, he is much wanted in Portugal. I am in hopes of seeing the Marquis of Romana, who I think must pass this on his way to Madrid. It is very important that I should see him, and if he is still within your reach, I wish you would present my compliments to him, and tell him so.

As they know at Madrid that you are in correspondence with me, Lord W. Bentinck and Mr. Frere think it probably unnecessary to write to you.

I have not a shilling! I wish you would bring on the blankets.

In case of your retreat, you cannot be followed with heavy artillery. I cannot therefore but think Coruña perfectly safe. Have your people looked at Balanzos Bay and the peninsula which divides it from Ferrol, or even Ferrol itself? I suppose the enemy without cannon beyond six-pounders.

Believe me sincerely,

JOHN MOORE.

I have written my sentiments fully to Government by this messenger; do not detain him longer than to write yours, which I believe will not differ much from mine, and the sooner the eyes of the good people of England are opened the better.

In consequence of the receipt of this letter, Sir David Baird went over to Leon, and visited the Marquis de la Romana, who appeared still sanguine, and expressed his hopes that he should be able to collect in a few days a force of 8 or 10,000 men; but from the appearance of those who were already assembled, very little expectation could be formed of their efficiency or utility; they seemed completely destitute of every requisite for the field.

It was on his return from this visit that Sir David Baird wrote to Lord Castlereagh, stating, that as he had heard from Sir John Moore that the communication between them was still open, and as the enemy had neither advanced rapidly nor in such force as might have been anticipated, he had abandoned the intention of retreating, and should endeavour to effect a junction with Sir John Moore as soon as his force could be collected.

The following letter from Sir John Moore, dated November 27th, shows that he was stimulated by a similar feeling to that by which Sir David was actuated. He says—

MY DEAR SIR DAVID,

The officer charged with your letter of the 24th was detained at Zamora, and did not reach this till this morning at six.

The letter which I wrote to you yesterday will satisfy you that I did not believe in any force being collected at Rio Seco, and has therefore, I hope, induced you to stop your retreat, and to hurry everything forward as fast as possible. In Rio Seco, and in all this neighbourhood, there is nothing but cavalry. As soon as you are ready to move on Beneventé, I shall move to Zamora and join, but take measures at the same time to forward the ordnance stores, ammunition, *money*, shoes, and *blankets*. I have none of the latter, and the men want them. In short, the more you can bring forward the better; even the salt pork would be an advantage, in order to give the commissariat occasionally a spare day to prepare fresh meat.

I believe the French are moving against Castaños, in order to beat him, and then to turn upon us; but that at present they have cavalry alone in Leon and the neighbouring provinces. I am in hopes of seeing the Marquis of Romana as he passes: with him I could come to some understanding.

Should you be forced, before we join, to retreat, consider whether the cavalry could not, under Lord Paget, make a push to join me; and if it be possible, let him try it, keeping well to his right.

As to the march through Portugal, it would meet no impediment but from want of food and roads. The enemy could not go in force, and dare not go in small numbers. A ship with forage could be sent to meet them at Oporto and Coimbra; but if it could, to embark the cavalry, and to place it in security until embarked, would be preferable to such a march.

I remain, my dear Sir David,

Yours sincerely,

JOHN MOORE.

Lord Proby is this instant come from Tordesillas—a patrol of French cavalry came into the town when he was