

During the period of these transactions, the enemy were occupied in concentrating their forces; and on the 30th Lord Wellington received intelligence that Joseph, the temporary King of Spain, Marshals Jourdan and Soult, and General Souham, with 80,000 men, were on their march; Souham with the intention of raising the siege of Burgos; and King Joseph with the design of cutting off Lord Wellington's communication with General Hill's division, between Aranjuez and Toledo. The siege was therefore raised on the 21st, and the army marched, after night-fall, unperceived by General Souham, who followed with a superior force, but did not overtake them till the evening of the 23d. A good deal of skirmishing then ensued between the cavalry on both sides, while the army continued its march to form a junction with General Hill, and oppose the united force of the enemy, now collected from different parts of the kingdom. During the march, the enemy, being very superior in cavalry, pressed on the rear of the army, and brought on several skirmishes, in which our cavalry displayed their usual spirited gallantry. The troops suffered much from the inclemency of the weather, from bad roads, and, still more, from the want of a regular supply of provisions.

This retrograde movement exhibited another instance of the impatience with which a British soldier bears a retreat, how quickly he loses his usual sense of duty and discipline, when he thinks he is not considered capable of meeting an enemy, and how readily he is animated and restored to duty and discipline when he perceives that confidence is again reposed in him, and that he is again to turn upon his foe. It has been seen in what manner the hurried retreat to Corunna disorganized the fine army under Sir John Moore, and how instantaneously order and animation were restored during the greatest despondency, and the utter absence of all discipline, whenever the sound of the order to battle, reached the ears of the troops. Harassed and half famish-