

him. In one particular, indeed, he shared the failings common to his class and times, after a fashion singularly contrasted with the subsequent developments of his character. Captain Wellesley got seriously into debt. So pressing, in fact, were his obligations, that he accepted temporary relief from a bootmaker in whose house he lodged; and before quitting England on foreign service confided the arrangement of his affairs to another Dublin tradesman, whom he empowered for this purpose to receive the disposable portion of his income.

At length, in the month of May, 1794, Arthur Wellesley, being then in his twenty-sixth year and in command of the 33d Regiment—a position which he owed to his brother's liberality—embarked at Cork for service on the continent of Europe, so that his first active duties involved great independent responsibility. The aspect of affairs at that period was unpromising in the extreme. War had been declared about twelve months previously between England and France; and 10,000 British troops, under the command of the Duke of York, had been despatched to aid the operations of the Allied Powers in the Low Countries. It would be difficult to impress an Englishman of the present generation with a true conception of the character and reputation of the British army at that period. Forty years had elapsed since the appearance of any considerable English force on the European continent, and the recollections of the campaigns in question were not calculated to suggest any high opinions of British prowess. In fact the Duke of Cumberland had been systematically beaten by Marshal Saxe, and the traditions of Marlborough's wars had been obliterated by contests in which the superiority of the French soldiery seemed to be declared. The ascendancy, too, so signally acquired at this time by our navy tended to confirm the impressions referred to, and it was argued that the ocean had been clearly marked out as the exclusive scene of our preponderance. Throughout a great part of the century these opinions had been rather justified than belied by our own proceedings. We fought many of our colonial battles with mercenaries, and we hired German battalions even to defend our coasts and protect the established succession of the Throne. A new school of war, to which the attention of the reader will be presently directed, was, indeed, forming in the East; but its influence was hardly yet known, and the Duke of York's corps was disembarked at Ostend with, perhaps, less prestige than any division of the allied army. Though the exertions of the Royal commander had already been directed, and with some success, to military reforms, yet the conditions of the service were still miserably bad. The commissariat was wretched, the medical department shamefully ineffective, and rapacity, peculation, and mismanagement prevailed to a most serious extent. Such was the army which Colonel Wellesley proceeded to join. It was no wonder that English as well as Imperialists were worsted by Republican levies, not only numerically superior, but whose system

confounded all received tactics as utterly as the campaigns of Charles VIII. in Italy demolished the conceptions of mediæval warfare. The Duke of York was repulsed in a series of engagements which we need not describe, and it was in aid of his discomfited force that Colonel Wellesley carried out the 33d Regiment to the scene of his first, as well as of his last service—the plains of Belgium.

The first military operation performed by the conqueror of Waterloo was the evacuation of a town in the face of the enemy. The 33d had been landed at Ostend; but when Lord Moira, who had the chief command of the reinforcements sent out, arrived at that port with the main body, he saw reason for promptly withdrawing the garrison and abandoning the place. Orders were issued accordingly, and though the Republicans, under Pichegru, were at the gates of the town before the English had quitted it, the 33d was safely embarked. Lord Moira by a flank march effected a timely junction with the Duke of York at Malines. Colonel Wellesley took his corps round by the Scheldt, and landed at Antwerp, whence he moved without delay to the head-quarters of the Duke. This was in July, 1794. The operations which followed, and which terminated in the following spring with the re-embarkation of the British troops at Bremerlehe, a town at the mouth of the Weser, constituted Arthur Wellesley's first campaign. They do not, for the purposes of our memoir, require any circumstantial description. The total force of the Allied Powers was strong, but it was extended over a long line of country, composed of heterogeneous troops, and commanded by generals, not only independent, but suspicious of each other's decisions. In the face of an enemy, first animated by desperation and then intoxicated by success, there existed no unity of plan or concert of movements. After the defeat sustained by the Austrians at Fleurus the campaign was resolved into retreat on the part of the Allies, and pursuit of fortune on the part of the French. The Austrians were on the middle Rhine, the British on the Meuse. The route taken by the Duke of York in his successive retirements from one position to another lay through Breda, Bois le Duc, and Nimeguen, at which latter place he maintained himself against the enemy with some credit. Early in December, however, he resigned his command to General Walmoden, and returned to England, leaving the unfortunate division to struggle with even greater difficulties than they had yet experienced. Disengaged by repeated triumphs from their Austrian antagonists, the Republican forces closed in tremendous strength round the English and their comrades. The winter set in with such excessive severity that the rivers were passable for the heaviest class of cannon, provisions were scanty, and little aid was forthcoming from the inhabitants against either the inclemency of the season or the casualties of war. It was found necessary to retire into Westphalia, and in this retreat, which was commenced on the 15th of January, 1795, the troops are said to have endured for