

THE SCOTISH TROOPS AT QUATRE-BRAS AND WATERLOO.

BESIDES the Scots Greys, and the multitudes of diffused Scottish soldiers, both horse and foot, who shared in the final triumph of the British arms over Buonaparte, three regiments emphatically Scottish because entirely Highland, the 42nd or Original Highlanders, the 79th or Cameron Highlanders, and the 92nd or Gordon Highlanders, were early summoned to the muster in Flanders, on the arrival of the news of Buonaparte's escape from Elba. They had, in common with other Highland regiments, acquired great fame in previous wars; and they were treated by the Belgians with high favour and consideration, and speedily got into such friendly terms with the families in Brussels in whose houses they were quartered as to reciprocate with them the warmest civilities and closest confidences of life, even to the extent of taking charge of their children,

and of keeping their shops. The intelligence of the approach of the French army arrived suddenly on the evening of the 15th of June, 1815; and was followed by prompt orders on the part of Lord Wellington and prompt movements on the part of the troops.

“ And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ;
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
 While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips—‘ The foe ! they come, they
 come ! ’ -

And wild and high the ‘ Cameron’s gathering ’ rose !
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn’s hills
 Have heard—and heard, too, have her Saxon foes ;
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
 Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the fierce native daring, which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years ;
 And Evan’s, Donald’s fame, rings in each clansman’s ears ! ”

Early on the 16th of July, a strong force took up a position at Quatre-Bras. The 92nd regiment was in brigade with the 28th, the 32nd, and the 95th, under Major-General Kempt; and the 42nd and the 92nd were in brigade with the 44th, under Major-General Pack; and these two brigades, along with a brigade of Hanoverians, the Brunswick cavalry and infantry, and a corps of Belgians, were ordered by Lord Wellington to maintain this important position. A very

powerful body of the French, under Marshal Ney, confronted them in nearly a parallel line. An expanse of plain ground lay between the two armies, part of it under growing corn and clear of wood, and part occupied by a piece of dense forest called Bois de Boissu. General Kempt's brigade formed into separate columns of regiments, extended on the plain to the left, and was first attacked by the enemy in great force. These were firmly met by the battalions, who successfully resisted repeated attempts of cavalry and infantry to break them. As the enemy continued to push forward fresh troops, the 42nd and 44th were ordered out on the plain to support General Kempt's brigade. A desperate conflict now ensued, each battalion of the British having to sustain, in several instances separately and independently, the whole weight of the French masses which bore down upon them.

In this arduous struggle the Cameron Highlanders supported the reputation they had acquired in the Peninsular war; for, not satisfied with repelling the enemy, they advanced upon them and drove them off the ground, still preserving, however, a regularity of formation which enabled them to meet every fresh attack. They received the attacks of the enemy sometimes in position, and at other times they advanced to meet the charge of the French infantry, who uniformly declined the onset. The charges of the cavalry were received in squares and always repulsed.

The Duke of Brunswick at the head of the Brunswick Hussars, pushed forward to check a column of French cavalry considerably in advance of the main body. But he was unfortunately killed; and the enemy taking advantage of the confusion into which the loss of their brave commander threw the Brunswickers, charged with great energy, and forced them to retire precipitately in the direction of the ditch along which the Gordon Highlanders were drawn up unperceived by the enemy. As soon as the cavalry came within reach, the Highlanders opened a well directed and

destructive fire upon them from behind the ditch. This unexpected attack completely disconcerted the enemy, who, thrown into irretrievable disorder by repeated volleys of musketry, fled in the utmost confusion, after sustaining a severe loss in killed and wounded.

The 42nd was drawn up in a field of barley nearly breast-high. At some distance they observed a corps of cavalry, which they supposed, from their uniform, to be Prussians or Belgians. They were in fact a body of French lancers; but the mistake was not discovered in time to receive the squadrons of the enemy in proper formation. The Highlanders endeavoured to throw themselves into a kind of square, which movement being observed by the enemy, they galloped up and charged the Highlanders with great impetuosity before they had nearly completed their formation. The enemy, however, were repulsed, and forced back at every point. The regiment now formed itself into a compact square, and in that situation gallantly withstood the repeated attacks of the lancers, who were unable to make any impression. At the end of every charge, the enemy, turning their backs, scampered off to a short distance, amid the jeers and laughter of the Highlanders, who kept firing at them both on their approach and retreat. Finding all their attempts against the Highland phalanx fruitless, the enemy desisted from the attack.

During three hours the allies had to contend against the most fearful odds, and had to sustain sometimes together, and sometimes in separate battalions, a series of desperate charges made by an enemy confident of victory. But at six o'clock in the evening, the arrival of a reinforcement from Brussels lessened the great disparity of force, and put the parties upon a more equal footing. A brigade of Guards, part of this reinforcement, was stationed on the right of Quatre Bras, and the other brigades on the left. The enemy now commenced a general discharge from a numerous artillery, which was so stationed as to cover the whole of the British line

They continued the cannonade for an hour, when they advanced in two columns, the one by the high road, the other through a hollow along the skirts of the thick wood Bois de Boissu. Unperceived by the allies, the enemy had already taken possession of a house on the Charleroi road, some hundred yards from the village; and had also occupied a garden and several thickset hedges near to the house. The Gordon Highlanders were no sooner informed of this than they instantly resolved to dispossess the enemy; and whilst one party, headed by Colonel Cameron, rapidly moved forward on the road, another party pushed round by their right. The enemy were so well covered by the garden and hedges that it required great exertions to dislodge them; but the Highlanders at last succeeded, not, however, till they had lost their brave commander, Colonel Cameron, and other valuable lives. After driving the enemy, who were greatly more numerous than their assailants, from this post, the Highlanders pursued them more than a quarter of a mile, until checked by the advance of a large body of French cavalry and infantry, preceded by artillery. Unable to resist this formidable force, the Highlanders retired along the edge of the wood of Boissu to their original position. Marshal Ney having failed in every attempt to force the allies from their position, and despairing of success, finally desisted from the attack at nine o'clock in the evening, leaving the allies in possession of the ground they had occupied at three o'clock, when the battle commenced.

On the morning of the 17th, Lord Wellington had collected the whole of his army in the position of Waterloo, and was combining his measures to attack the enemy; but having received information that Marshal Blucher had been obliged, after the battle of Ligny, to abandon his position at Sombref and to fall back upon Wavre, his lordship found it necessary to make a corresponding movement. He accordingly retired upon Genappe, and thence upon Waterloo.

Although the march took place in the middle of the day, the enemy made no attempt to molest the rear, except by following with a large body of cavalry, brought from his right, the cavalry under the Earl of Uxbridge. On the former debouching from the village of Genappe, the Earl made a gallant charge with the Life Guards and repulsed the enemy's cavalry.

Lord Wellington took up a position in front of Waterloo. The rain fell in torrents during the night; and the morning of the 18th was ushered in by a dreadful thunder-storm,—a prelude which superstition might have regarded as ominous of the events of that memorable and decisive day. The allied army was drawn up across the high roads from Charleroi and Nivelles, with its right thrown back to a ravine near Merke Braine, which was occupied, and its left extended to a height above the hamlet Ter-la-Haye, which was also occupied. In front of the right centre, and near the Nivelles road, they occupied the house and farm of Hougomont; and in front of the left centre, they possessed the farm of La Haye Sainte. Buonaparte drew up his army on a range of heights in front of the allies; and about ten o'clock in the morning, he commenced the battle by a furious attack upon the post at Hougomont, and by a very heavy cannonade upon the whole line of the allies.

Major-General Kempt's brigade, with the 28th and 32nd regiments, formed the centre of Lieutenant-general Picton's division. A corps of Belgians and part of the Rifle brigade occupied a hedge, in the rear of which, at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards, the 32nd and 79th were stationed. About two hours after the commencement of the battle three heavy columns of the enemy, preceded by artillery and sharpshooters, advanced towards the hedge. The Belgians fired a volley and retired in great disorder. The enemy then began to deploy into line, but before they could complete this operation the 32nd, 79th, and Rifle corps pushed forward.

and, forming upon the hedge, fired a volley, charged the enemy, and threw them into confusion. In an attempt to get towards their right the enemy were received by the 28th, which warmly attacked their right as they advanced. The 32nd and 79th followed up their advantage, each attacking the column opposed to them, till at length the enemy gave way in the greatest confusion. At this moment General Picton was killed and General Kempt severely wounded; but although unable, from the severity of the wound, to sit on horseback, the latter would not allow himself to be carried off the field. The enemy rallied, and renewed their attempts to gain possession of the hedge, but without success.

The Gordon Highlanders were in the ninth brigade with the Royal Scots, the Royal Highlanders, and the 44th regiment. This brigade was stationed on the left wing upon the crest of a small eminence, forming one side of the hollow, or low valley, which divided the two hostile armies. A hedge ran along this crest for nearly two-thirds its whole length. A brigade of Belgians, another of Hanoverians, and General Ponsoby's brigade of the 1st or Royal Dragoons, Scotch Greys, and Inniskillings, were posted in front of this hedge. It was not till about two o'clock that these were attacked. At that time the enemy, covered by a heavy fire of artillery, advanced in a solid column of 3,000 infantry of the guard, with drums beating, and all the accompaniments of military array, towards the position of the Belgians. The enemy received a temporary check from the fire of the Belgians and from some artillery; but the troops of Nassau gave way, and, retiring behind the crest of the eminence, left a large space open to the enemy. To prevent the enemy from entering by this gap, the third battalion of the Royal Scots, and the second battalion of the 44th, were ordered up to occupy the ground so abandoned; and here a warm conflict of some duration took place, in which the two regiments lost many men and expended their ammunition. The enemy's columns conti-

ning to press forward, General Pack ordered up the Highlanders, calling out, "Ninety-second, now is your time; charge." This order being repeated by Major Macdonald, the soldiers answered it by a shout. Though then reduced to less than 250 men, the regiment instantly formed two men deep, and rushed to the front, against a column ten or twelve men deep, and equal in length to their whole line. The enemy, as if appalled by the advance of the Highlanders, stood motionless; and upon a nearer approach they became panic-struck, and, wheeling to the rear, fled in the most disorderly manner, throwing away their arms and every thing that incumbered them. So rapid was their flight, that the Highlanders, notwithstanding their nimbleness of foot, were unable to overtake them; but General Ponsonby pursued them with the cavalry at full speed, and cutting into the centre of the column, killed numbers and took nearly eighteen hundred prisoners. The animating sentiment, "Scotland for ever!" received a mutual cheer as the Greys galloped past the Highlanders, and the former felt the effect of the appeal so powerfully, that, not content with the destruction or surrender of the flying column, they passed it, and charged up to the line of the French position. "*Les braves Ecosais; qu'ils sont terribles ces Chevaux Gris!*" exclaimed Napoleon, when, in succession, he saw the small body of Highlanders forcing one of his chosen columns to fly, and the Greys charging almost into his very line.

During the remainder of the day, the 92nd regiment remained at the post assigned them; but no opportunity afterwards occurred of giving another proof of their prowess. The important service they rendered at a critical moment, by charging and routing the élite of the French infantry, entitle them to share largely in the honours of the victory. "A column of such strength," says Stewart, "composed of veteran troops, filled with the usual confidence of the soldiers of France, thus giving way to so inferior a force, and by their

retreat exposing themselves to certain destruction from the charges of cavalry ready to pour in and overwhelm them, can only be accounted for by the manner in which the attack was made, and is one of the numerous advantages of that mode of attack I have had so often occasion to notice. Had the Highlanders, with their inferior numbers, hesitated and remained at a distance, exposed to the fire of the enemy, half an hour would have been sufficient to annihilate them, whereas in their bold and rapid advance they *lost only four men*. The two regiments, which for some time resisted the attacks of the same column, were unable to force them back. They remained stationary to receive the enemy, who were thus allowed time and opportunity to take a cool and steady aim; encouraged by a prospect of success, the latter doubled their efforts; indeed, so confident were they, that when they reached the plain upon the summit of the ascent, they ordered their arms, as if to rest after the victory. But the handful of Highlanders soon proved on which side the victory lay. Their bold and rapid charge struck their confident opponents with terror, paralyzed their sight and aim, and deprived both of point and object. The consequence was, as it will always be in nine cases out of ten in similar circumstances, that the loss of the 92nd regiment was, as I have just stated, only four men, whilst the other corps in their stationary position lost eight times that number."