

if liberally supplied with the munitions of war, might defend for ever against a stronger. The successes of the British navy under Nelson had given it the complete command of the sea; and so to a British army these indispensable munitions could be supplied. On the other hand, the base-line from which the French had to carry on their operations was distant. The wild Pyrenees, and with them wide tracts of rough and hostile country, stretched between the French armies and their native France. They could not be supported, in consequence, by munitions drawn from their own country; and the hostile country in which they encamped was by much too poor to enable them to realize that part of Napoleon's policy through which he made hostile countries support the war which wasted them, and to which he had given such effect on the fertile plains of Germany. Spain could not support great armies; and so great combinations could be maintained within its territories for only a few days at a time, and then fall apart again. Wellington, from behind his lines, marched out now upon one separate army, anon upon another; now upon one strong fortress, anon upon another; never opposed himself to overpowering odds; and, when the odds were not overpowering, or the fortress not impregnable, always carried the siege or gained the battle. He broke up in detail the armies of France. When they effected one of their great combinations against him, he fell coolly back on his lines; sometimes, as he saw opportunity, stopping by the way, as at Busaco, to gain a battle, and to convince the enemy that he was merely retreating, not running away. And then, when the combination fell to pieces, as fall to pieces he saw it could not fail, he again began to beat piecemeal the armies of which it had been composed. Time after time were the best troops of France poured across the Pyrenees to bear down the modern Fabius, and time after time did they sink under the peculiar difficulties of their circumstances and the