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Chapter V.

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CHAPTER V.

Accession of Queen Anne and occurrences during her reign—the King of Spain, Mareschal Tallard, &c., attended by escorts from the Blues—Death of the Queen—The Blues form a Guard of Honour to receive her Successor—Occurrences during the Reigns of George the First and Second—War with France—The Blues embark for the Continent—An Army formed in the Netherlands—Battle of Dettingen—The Army retires into quarters in the Netherlands—The Duke of Cumberland assumes the command—Battle of Fontenoy.

1691 FROM this time, for a period of no less than fifty years, during the whole of which the Regiment was employed upon home service, the transactions in which it was engaged were not of a very interesting or important character. Its conduct during the war in Ireland seems to have confirmed the King in his confident reliance upon its services, and to have convinced him that its present officers were attached to his government* ; it was therefore employed to furnish guards, escorts, &c., for the King or Royal Family, upon all occasions where state was required. Indeed, King William, throughout the remainder of his reign, seldom travelled in England without an escort furnished by this Regiment, a strong

* In the year 1692 a proclamation was issued for the apprehension of the Earls of Scarborough, Lichfield, and others, charged with conspiring to overturn the Government ; amongst those named are Colonel Slingsby, Charles Adderley, Esq., and David Lloyd, Esq., three officers who bore commissions in the Royal Horse Guards at the Revolution.

detachment from which always accompanied him 1691 in his numerous journeys to and from Margate, which was his usual place of embarkation and disembarkation on his progress to and return from Holland; and the Head Quarters were almost constantly established in Westminster, in order (say the Marching Orders of the period), 'to attend their Majesties' persons.' On the 5th of March, 1694, the King went to Portsmouth to 1694 inspect the fleet, when he was escorted by a party of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, detachments from which attended His Majesty during his progress through a great part of the kingdom, in October, 1697, when he visited several of the 1697 nobility at their residences in the country*. On the accession of Queen Anne, March 8, 1702, that Princess retained the Regiment in immediate attendance upon the Court; and upon the decease of the Earl of Oxford, March 12, 1703 †, who had 1703

* Marching Orders, War Office.

† This nobleman was twice married, but died without male issue, and his titles became extinct: his first wife was the daughter of Paul, Viscount Bayning; his second, who survived him, was the daughter of George Kirke, Esq., Groom of the Bedchamber. In the Memoirs of the Count de Grammont, an anecdote is related of an actress said to have been seduced by the Earl of Oxford, by the artifice of a pretended marriage, at which the trumpeter and kettle-drummer of his Lordship's regiment officiated as parson and clerk. This story, however characteristic of the licentious gallantry of a courtier of the reign of Charles II., is probably not entitled to implicit credit. The name of the actress is not recorded, but she is supposed to have been the Roxalana, so called from her performance of that character, mentioned in the Diaries of Evelyn and Pepys; and the occurrence, if true, must have taken place shortly after the Restoration.

1703 commanded it, with the exception of one short intermission, during forty-two years, the command of the corps, now familiarly called 'The Oxford 'Blues,' was given to the Duke of Northumberland, natural son of King Charles II. On the 9th of August, in that year, the Regiment attended the Queen to Bath; and in the subsequent November, the second son of the Emperor, now recognized as King of Spain by a great portion of Europe, having landed at Portsmouth, proceeded to Windsor, where he was received by the Queen with much state, and all the honours due to a crowned head. On his return to Portsmouth in order to embark for his new dominions, he was escorted by a squadron of this Regiment*.

1704 On the 4th of December in the year following, the French Mareschal Tallard, and several other officers of distinction, who had been taken prisoners at the battle of Blenheim, upon landing at Blackwall, were removed to Nottingham and Lichfield, under the escort of two troops of the Blues, which remained in attendance upon the Mareschal and his companions during their long detention in England †.

* Marching Orders, War Office.

† Upon giving their parole, the French officers were allowed full liberty to remove to any place within a certain distance of the above-named places; and the Duke of Devonshire having invited Marshal Tallard and some of his unfortunate companions to Chatsworth, entertained them for several days with great hospitality; at parting, the Marshal warmly expressed his gratitude to his noble host, and assured him that 'in computing the time of his captivity 'in England, he should omit those days spent in enjoyment at 'Chatsworth.'

In 1708, the Regiment was quartered in the 1708 North, in consequence of the threatened invasion of the Pretender, who having at length made an attempt to land in Scotland, one of his ships (the Salisbury) was captured in the Forth, and the prisoners taken on board were sent into England by the Earl of Leven, commanding the forces in Scotland, under the escort of a party of the Blues.

On the 22d of September, the Regiment formed a relay of escorts to attend the Queen on her progress to and from Newmarket: and in May, 1711, 1711 it marched to Harwich, in order to embark for foreign service, but was afterwards disposed in quarters at Colchester, Ipswich, and the vicinity. On the 4th of January, 1712, the Duke of Nor- 1712 thumberland being appointed to the command of the First Troop of Horse Guards, the command of the Blues was given to Richard, Earl Rivers: he, however, dying on the 19th of August, in that year, was succeeded as Colonel, by Charles, Earl of Peterborough, who had acquired a high reputation by his skilful conduct during two campaigns, as Commander of the forces in Spain.

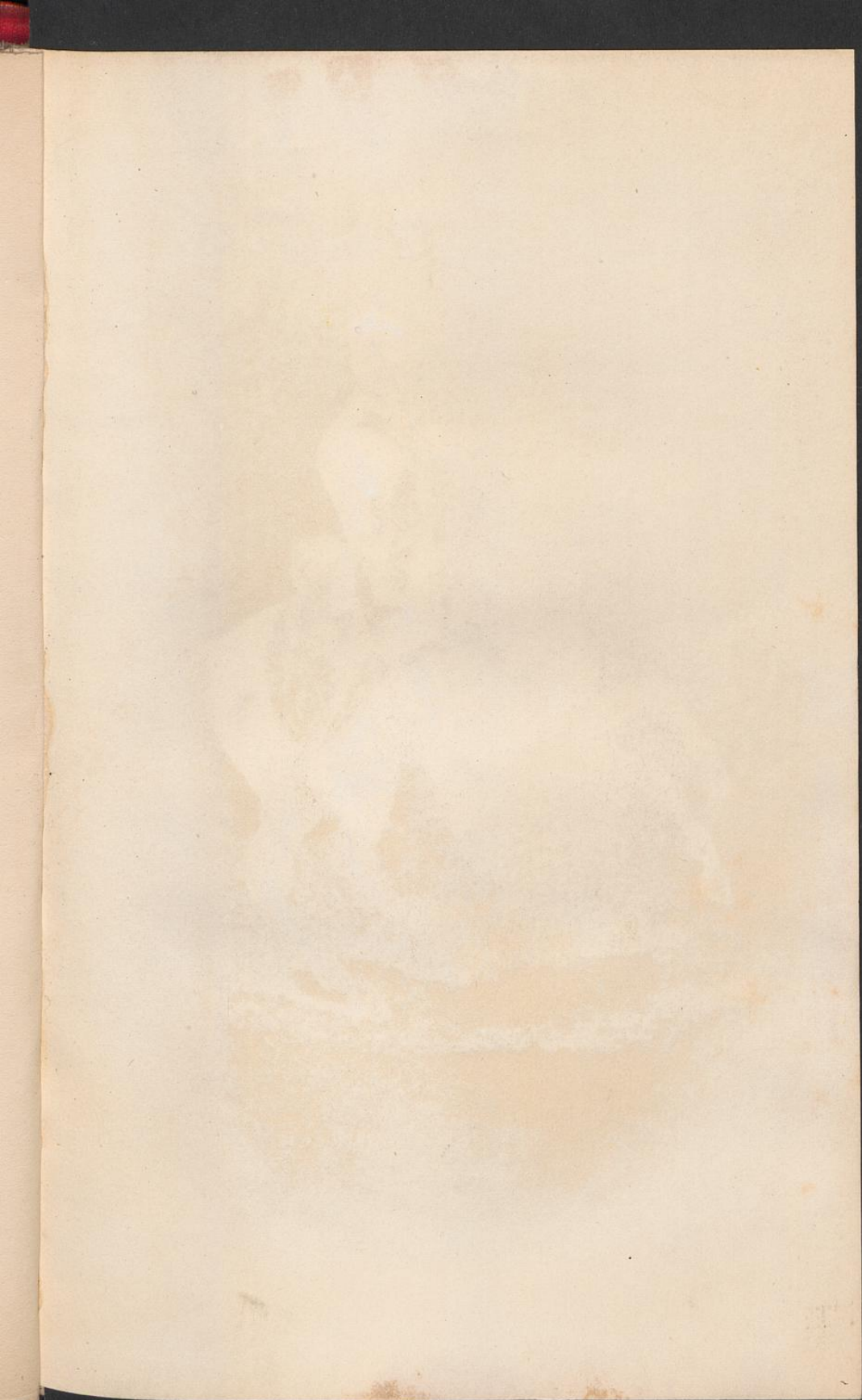
On the death of Queen Anne, August 1, 1714, 1714 great preparations were made to receive her successor, King George, with becoming state. Two troops of the Regiment were disposed on the road to receive His Majesty on his arrival; and fifty men, with officers proportionate, were ordered to take the guard at the Horse Guards, on the day before His Majesty proceeded from Greenwich to his Palace*.

* Marching Orders, War Office.

1714 King George the First, like his predecessors, seems to have constantly employed this Regiment near his person. But as the reign of this Monarch was one of the most pacific in our history, the annals of a military body during that period are, of course, proportionably meagre and uninteresting. On the resignation of the Earl of Peterborough (13th of June, 1715), upon his appointment as Ambassador to the Italian States, he was succeeded as Colonel by John, Duke of Argyle, who had successfully exerted his great military talents in quelling the Rebellion in Scotland*. But this nobleman, shortly afterwards declining in favour with the Court, was dismissed from his 1717 command (March 8, 1717), and was succeeded by Charles, Marquis of Winchester, afterwards third Duke of Bolton. The quarters of the Regiment were throughout this reign widely dispersed, yet seldom at any great distance from the metropolis, near or in which a party was usually stationed to attend upon the Court. On the 23d of October, 1719 1719, it formed a relay of escorts to attend the King from Margate to London, on his return from Hanover. Again it formed a relay of escorts on the road to Harwich to receive His Majesty, on the 1720 18th of October, 1720. In the summer of 1722 1722 it was encamped at Hounslow, and in August of that year escorted the King to Portsmouth. 1725 In November, 1725, it again formed a relay of escorts on the road from Margate, to receive the

* This was the nobleman panegyriized by Pope:—

‘ Argyle, the State’s whole thunder born to wield,
And shake alike the Senate or the field.’





ROYAL REGT OF HORSE GUARDS. 1742.

Standidge & Co, Litho.

King on his return from the Continent. On the 1725 accession of King George II., the Regiment continued to occupy generally the same quarters as in the preceding reign. In August, 1732, it, as usual, escorted the King into London on his return from abroad. In 1733 (August 6), the Duke of Bolton having joined with the opposition against the ministry of Sir Robert Walpole, was deprived of his Regiment*, and was succeeded by the Duke of Argyle, who now, for the second time, assumed the command of the Blues. This nobleman, afterwards becoming an opponent of the minister, resigned the Coloneley on the 6th of May, 1740, and was succeeded by Algernon, Earl of Hertford, eldest son of the Duke of Somerset—but on the retirement of Sir Robert Walpole from power, in 1742, his friend, the Earl of Hertford, was superseded, and the Duke of Argyle was, for the third time, appointed Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards (February 24); at the same time he was made Master-General of the Ordnance, and Commander-in-Chief of all the forces in South Britain; but finding himself, says Smollet, disappointed in his expectations of the

* At the same time Lord Cobham was removed from the command of the First Dragoon Guards. These removals led to very violent debates in both Houses of Parliament, in one of which, the Duke of Argyle said, with more bitterness than good taste, 'That though two Lords had been removed, only one Soldier had lost his commission.' The insult was levelled at his predecessor. Lord Cobham's past services and great military talents were sufficiently notorious. About three years after this, Cornet Pitt, afterwards the great Lord Chatham, was deprived of his commission in Lord Cobham's old Regiment, now the First Dragoon Guards.

1742 Coalition Ministry, which was now formed, on the 16th of March following he resigned all these employments, and the Earl of Hertford resumed the command of the Regiment.

At length the King having entered into an alliance with the Queen of Hungary against France, determined to assemble an army to cooperate with the Austrian Generals on the Continent, and for this service the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards was one of the first selected. Accordingly it embarked from Gravesend towards the close of the summer of 1742. The British army, assembled near Ghent, in the Netherlands, under the command of the Earl of Stair, amounted to about sixteen thousand men, and these troops were afterwards joined by six thousand Hessians and sixteen thousand Hanoverians in British pay. The allied armies having remained in their quarters during the ensuing winter, began their march
1743 for the Rhine in the spring of 1743. On the 21st of March, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, accompanied by her husband, the Prince of Lorraine, made her public entrance into Brussels as Sovereign of the Netherlands, and was escorted into that city by one hundred of His Britannic Majesty's Blue Guards*. The march of the allied armies was much delayed by the badness of the roads; but, at length, in the month of May, they were encamped at Hoechst, three leagues from Frankfort, on the right bank of the river Mayne,

* London Gazette.

the appointed rendezvous. In order to prevent a 1743 junction between the Anglo-Hanoverian armies and the Austrian army, under Prince Charles of Lorraine, the King of France, whilst he sent an army under Mareschal Coigny to oppose the latter, ordered the Duke De Noailles, with a large force, to advance to the Mayne against the Earl of Stair; who now moved forward to Aschaffenberg with a view of securing the navigation of the Upper Mayne, which was necessary for the conveyance of his provisions and forage. But the French Commander, having possessed himself of the principal posts on the river above that town, was enabled to cut off their supplies; and having also, by means of parties and other precautions intercepted the communication of the allies with Frankfort. The King of England, on his arrival in the camp (July 19), accompanied by his second son, the Duke of Cumberland, found his army eager for battle, but in great danger of starvation. In this emergency, hearing that a reinforcement of twelve thousand Hanoverians and Hessians had reached Hanau, he resolved to march thither, both with a view to effect a junction, and to obtain provisions for his forces. The tents were accordingly struck at day-break on the 26th of June (N.S.), and the army commenced its march through the confined plain which extended between the mountains and the river, and which no where exceeded a mile in breadth. Noailles, in the mean time, having sent a party to secure Aschaffenberg immediately it was abandoned by the allies, caused the greater part of his

1743 army to cross the river lower down at Seligenstadt, and, taking possession of the village of Dettingen, occupied a position of great strength, along the front of which ran a rivulet through a morass; the right of his army being protected by the village of Dettingen and the river, and the left by an almost impassable mountain and woods. Then himself repassing the Mayne, he directed the fire of several strong batteries, which were advantageously posted, to gall the flank of the allies, who now finding their march intercepted, prepared to form their army in two lines, in order to attack the enemy in their front; the Earl of Stair, who commanded under the King, directing this disposition. But as the greater part of the British infantry was in the rear, where the King seems to have expected the attack would be made, it was some time before they could be brought up to form in their intended position. The time was thus occupied from eight o'clock till twelve, during the whole of which, the Blues, with some other regiments of cavalry which covered the formation, were exposed to the destructive fire of the French batteries, which, posted on the rising grounds on the opposite side of the Mayne, flanked them from left to right, within two hundred paces. The disposition for battle being at length completed, the King placed himself at the head of the second line, and addressed his troops in an animating strain, encouraging them 'to fight for the honour of England;' and never did encouragement seem to be more needed, for never surely was the British

Lion more apparently within the toils of the hunter 1743 than now, when the rashness of an individual liberated the Monarch and his army from the perils that surrounded them, and deprived the Mareschal de Noailles of a triumph, which his skilful dispositions seemed to have all but insured.

The nephew of the Mareschal, the Duke de Grammont, had been left in command at Dettin-gen, and being accompanied by two princes of the Blood and the flower of the French nobility, at the head of the household troops and *gens-d'armes*, was impatient of this inactivity before an enemy supposed to be dispirited by privation and fatigue. Abandoning his strong position, therefore, he rashly led these chosen troops across the morass to attack the British left. In the first impetuosity of the attack, one or two regiments seem to have given way before them, but being at length hemmed in by the infantry, they were almost entirely destroyed. The battle was now become general along the line, and General Clayton, who commanded on the left, fearing lest his flank should be turned, sent for some cavalry to assist him. Bland's Dragoons (the Third) were accordingly moved to the left, and drove the enemy back with great slaughter. This successful attack was well seconded by the Blues, with Honeywood's (the First), and Ligonier's (the Seventh) Dragoon Guards. The allied troops now gradually gained upon the French, who were at length defeated at all points, and, abandoning their strong positions, were pursued by the British cavalry to

1743 the banks of the river, across which they fled with precipitation. Several standards were taken from the enemy, whose loss in this action is said to have been near five thousand men, killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. On the side of the allies, Generals Clayton and Monroy were killed; the Duke of Cumberland, the Earl of Albemarle, General Huske, and some other officers of distinction, were wounded; and the total loss amounted to near two thousand killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. The loss of the Blues was as follows: one trumpeter, seven rank and file, twenty-two horses killed, one officer (Cornet Davies), and fourteen horses wounded*.

After the battle, the King declining to pursue

* Shortly after the news of this victory was known in England a report was industriously spread, that the Blues, when called upon, had refused to advance; this was naturally taken up very warmly by the Regiment, and Lieutenant-Colonel Beake, Major Jenkinson, and Captain Sir James Chamberlayne, who each commanded a squadron in the action, waited upon Lord Stair, with a request that he would do the Regiment justice by contradicting such injurious reports. A similar appeal was made to General Honeywood, who led the Regiment to the attack. Both these officers at once declared the reports false and malicious; but no further notice being taken of it, many persons gave credit to the story, which seems to have had its origin in party feeling. The prepossessions of the King in favour of his Hanoverian troops, were well known, and the attempt to exalt their services at the expense of the reputation of one of the first regiments in the British service, probably originated with some of the flatterers of the Court. At this distance of time, the best proof of the absolute falsity of the report consists in the fact, that the King continued to place the utmost confidence in the services of the Regiment, which, he was assured by its conduct at Fontenoy, two years afterwards, was not misplaced.

the enemy, whose retreat beyond the Mayne appears to have been covered by their formidable train of artillery, continued his march to Hanau; where the Earl of Stair, disgusted at the preference shewn to the Hanoverian Generals, resigned his command, and returned to England*. During the remainder of the campaign the allied armies were not engaged in any important operations, and, returning to Flanders, were early distributed into winter quarters.

Throughout the year 1744, the allied army continued posted behind the Scheldt in a state of almost complete inactivity. The apparent attachment of the King to the interests of Hanover had rendered his Government unpopular to his English subjects, and given rise to violent debates in Parliament. The Pretender, thus encouraged, threatened a descent upon his dominions at the head of a French army; and under these circumstances the King of England did not venture to commit his army in Flanders in any affair of importance, uncertain how soon he might require its services at home.

In the following year the French King, desirous to complete the conquest of Flanders, assembled a large army, consisting of seventy-six thousand men, under Count Saxe, with which Tournay was invested; and shortly afterwards the King, accompanied by the Dauphin, arrived in the camp. To oppose these formidable prepa-

* Life of the Earl of Stair.

1745 rations the Duke of Cumberland was hastily despatched from London, to take the command of the British and Hanoverian armies, encamped near Brussels; where they were joined by a Dutch army, under the command of the Prince of Waldeck, and a small force of Austrians, under Count Konigseg. The whole allied army amounted to about fifty-three thousand men, and with this force it was resolved to attempt the relief of Tournay.

Accordingly, decamping on the 1st of May, the allies advanced to Halle, and afterwards, on the 3rd, to Cambroun, from whence the whole army advanced, in order of battle, on the 7th, and on the 10th took up a position in front of that occupied by the French. The French army was strongly posted upon a rising ground; the village of Antoine, on their right, and that of Fontenoy, in front of their centre, were strongly fortified with heavy cannon. Connecting these, and beyond them, a chain of redoubts extended to their extreme left; where, at the verge of the wood of Barri, was erected a formidable battery, to flank the approaches to the position. After some skirmishing on the evening of the 10th the French outposts were driven in, and at two o'clock on the morning of the 11th the confederate army marched forwards, to occupy a small plain, which lay between them and the enemy. The right wing, composed of English, and the Hanoverians, under General Zastrow, forming the centre, were to form in four lines, in front of the village of Vezont; and the left wing, consisting of the

Dutch and Austrians, were to draw up on the left, as far as the wood of Pierrone. The army marched up in three columns; the first, which was cavalry, moving by the road of Mons, along the village of Vezont; the second, consisting of infantry, marched through the village of Vezont; and the third stretched forward into the plain, between Fontenoy and Antoine. The Duke of Cumberland having detached General Ingoldsby, with four battalions and three six-pounders, against the fort in the wood of Barri, ordered Sir James Campbell, who commanded the cavalry, with twelve squadrons, to defile through Vezont, and enter the plain, leaving the highway and enclosures to their right hand, so as to cover the infantry of the right wing, commanded by Sir John Ligonier, whilst they were forming, by extending those squadrons along the plain from the wood towards Fontenoy. 'It is inconceivable,' says an experienced eye-witness, 'what a number of bullets plunged in upon the British troops all the time (above an hour) their first line and cavalry were forming.' Sir James Campbell had his leg shot off, and died shortly afterwards; upon which the command of these squadrons, covering the formation, devolved upon Lord Crawford, Colonel of the Fourth Troop of Horse Guards; and afterwards upon General Hawley, who took the command of the whole cavalry of the right wing, and formed it in order of battle, in rear of the infantry.

In the mean time the British infantry, com-

1745 manded by the Duke of Cumberland in person, assisted by Sir John Ligonier, advanced against the enemy, and never was made a more gallant and persevering attack; though the fire from the French batteries was so heavy, that it swept off whole ranks at a single discharge, they continued to advance as if they were invulnerable, repulsing in succession every regiment of the enemy that presented itself*. The Hanoverian troops also behaved with great bravery; but the Dutch, having totally failed in their attack upon the village of Fontenoy, and owing to a misapprehension of his orders, General Ingoldsby having neglected to attack the fort in the wood of Barri, the infantry were terribly exposed to the cross-fire of the enemy's batteries; and such was the confined nature of the ground, that it was not till late in the day that the cavalry were enabled to press forward to their succour. Scrambling through a hollow way, abounding in difficulties, 'at last,' says the gallant Lord Crawford, in his Memoirs, 'a few squadrons got up, and passed the fort through a dreadful fire; and a few of some other broken corps, as they got rallied, after passing the before-mentioned hollow way, so far as, I believe, at least, to be serviceable in covering the retreat of the infantry. Most advanced there were two squadrons of the Blues, some of the Hanoverians, and some few of the Dutch and Austrians, of the *corps de reserve*, who had

* Voltaire.

‘ not been broken by passing the hollow way ; 1745
‘ because most of those that passed it had only
‘ got rallied, as most of those that advanced were
‘ coming back again in much greater haste than
‘ they went forward, breaking several of the Bri-
‘ tish corps that were rallied, so that they never
‘ recovered again. Without prejudice I declare,
‘ that I have too great reason to say, the Dutch
‘ dragoons led the way, for I never had a greater
‘ risk than in being run over by them : and had
‘ not my horse been of prodigious strength, I
‘ must have been trampled to death. I had just
‘ rallied the brigade of Horse Guards, and was
‘ moving forwards, finding there was no cavalry
‘ got on by the flank of the second line, which
‘ had now lost some battalions, that were carried
‘ elsewhere, when they came upon us and broke
‘ us anew. With the assistance of my officers,
‘ who were very alert and willing, I had just got
‘ them a third time rallied, as all the cavalry that
‘ had been made to move forwards came back in
‘ confusion : those that I saw returning in the
‘ best order being the two squadrons of the Blues,
‘ whom I begged to halt, and rally by my Horse
‘ Guards ; but all those who attacked together,
‘ also rallied together. It was impossible better
‘ could come of a manœuvre, which was far from
‘ being a proper one, by the marching or allowing
‘ those squadrons to advance, and be beat in
‘ detail, if the retreat was not determined before
‘ they were allowed to do so ; because there were
‘ not numbers enough together to withstand any

1745 ‘ corps of the enemy’s cavalry who would hazard
‘ anything with them ; besides, it was impossible
‘ for separate squadrons, not to call them broken,
‘ to hurry on with spirit, and to have steadiness
‘ to stand long enough under the innumerable
‘ dropping shots ; indeed, without being a Gascon,
‘ I may call it constant fire from the enemies’
‘ batteries*.’

It was past two o’clock, when the Duke of Cumberland, deserted by his Dutch allies, disappointed in his hopes of a sally from the garrison of Tournay, and discouraged by other disadvantageous circumstances, determined to retire from the field, now red with the blood of many of the bravest in his army. Accordingly the signal being given, the troops commenced their retreat, retiring through Vezont with tolerable regularity. The several battalions facing about as occasion required, and being supported by some squadrons, which had successfully rallied under Lord Crawford, they were enabled to check the advance of their scarcely victorious pursuers. In this engagement Sir James Campbell† and General Ponsonby were killed ; and Lord Albemarle, Major-General Howard, Brigadier-Generals Ingoldsby and Churchill, and several other distinguished officers were wounded. The total loss of the British and Hanoverians exceeded ten thousand men, killed, wounded, and missing ; whilst that of the enemy is said to have been even greater.

* Life and Memoirs of John, Lord Crawford. London, 1759.

† Colonel of the Scotch Greys.

The loss of several of the British regiments 1745 was very severe; that of the Blues was as follows: killed, ten men, and seventy-nine horses: wounded, Lieutenant-Colonel Beake, Captain Lloyd, Captain-Lieutenant Migget*, Quarter-Masters Hudson and But, thirty-nine men, and sixty-two horses; missing, seven men, and nine horses†. In the British official account of this battle the behaviour of this Regiment is adverted to in terms of high commendation; and Major Jenkinson, upon whom (Lieutenant-Colonel Beake having been wounded) the command of it devolved, is stated to have particularly distinguished himself by his conduct and care.

* The Lieutenant commanding the King's Troop held the rank of Captain-Lieutenant. This distinction continued till 1799, when regular Captains were appointed to the King's, also the Lieutenant-Colonel's and the Major's Troops.

† London Gazette.