



No. VI.

Price One Penny.

**BATTLES OF THE
*Nile and Alexandria.***

A SELECTION OF
AMUSING AND INSTRUCTIVE
PAMPHLETS;

COMPRISING
LIVES OF GREAT WARRIORS & STATESMEN,
BATTLES ON SEA & LAND,
HISTORIES OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES,
ACCOUNTS OF WONDERFUL EVENTS, SINGULAR
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Battle of the Nile.

BEFORE proceeding to give an account of this splendid naval engagement, it becomes necessary to take a momentary view of the relative positions of the two contending powers, France and England, at the period when it was fought. Early in the year 1798, Britain was alarmed by reports of a threatened invasion from France, and by accounts of great naval preparations on the coast of that country, opposite to England. The idea of invading our shores, however, which had been actually contemplated, was abandoned, and the project of conquering Egypt substituted in its place. The principle object of Buonaparte, who suggested this expedition, was to invade our possessions in the East Indies, to gratify his own ambition, and to

secure to France a share, if not the whole, of the commerce of the East. The invasion of Egypt being then resolved upon, a large fleet, having on board a numerous army, commanded by Buonaparte, sailed from Toulon on the 19th of May, 1798. The line of battle ships, of this formidable armament, extended for a league; and the immense convoy, by which they were accompanied, formed a semicircle of nearly six times that extent. On the 29th of June following, the French fleet arrived in safety on the coast of Egypt, though not without making several narrow escapes from the British squadron, commanded by the immortal Nelson, who had been for some weeks in quest of them. The French troops having been landed, the fleet proceeded to the bay of Aboukir, a short distance from the place of debarkation, and there came to anchor; taking up, at the same time, what they considered a strong position, in case of any attack from the English squadron, should they be discovered.

Nelson was scouring the seas in search of this fleet; and having repaired to the neighbourhood of Naples for information, he directed his course towards Sicily. He there learned the surrender of Malta, and immediately took on board expert pilots, and passed the straits of Messina. He was now informed that the French had left Malta; he instantly steered for Candia, and being assured they were bound for Egypt, whither he concluded they must have directed their course, as they had sailed from Toulon with a north-west wind. After a pursuit of several weeks' duration, sometimes obtaining intelligence of the enemy, and for many days together, losing sight entirely of their route, Nelson learned that they had gone towards Alexandria. To this place, therefore, he determined to proceed

with all possible dispatch. On the 1st of August the Pharos, a light house off Alexandria, was discovered by the British fleet, who were steering directly towards it; and, as they approached, discovered a wood of masts in the harbour. A nearer inspection, however, showed them, to their great mortification, that there was not a single ship of war amongst them; and that, therefore, they were not there whom they sought. But their disappointment was of short duration; in a short time afterwards, the Alexander and Leander, two of Nelson's ships, which were about two leagues ahead of the fleet, flung out the joyful signal that they had discovered ships of war to the eastward. The straggling ships were instantly called in,—the fleet was formed in compact order,—and, in a short time, the bay of Aboukir, filled with the ships of the enemy, opened on the gratified sight of the British squadron.

The French fleet, under the command of Admiral Brueys, were moored in a strong and compact line of battle, stretching nearly across the bay, and consisted of 13 ships of the line, and 4 frigates, carrying 1196 guns, and 11,230 men. The English had the same number of ships of the line, and one 50 gun ship, carrying 1012 guns, and 8068 men. The English ships were all 74's. The French had three 80 gun ships, and one 3 decker of 120. This last was the L'Orient, the admiral's own ship. Nelson had no sooner obtained a sight of the position which the enemy had assumed, than he determined, with that promptitude of decision for which he was so remarkable, on the mode of attack. The enemy's ships, as we have already said, were anchored in a line across the bay, the admiral's, the L'Orient, occupying the centre. Nelson immediately conceived the bold idea of

doubling the line, and taking up a position, with part of his fleet, inside between them and the land; where, he rightly judged, he would find them altogether unprepared, and the fact turned out as he anticipated. Never dreaming that such a manœuvre would be attempted, or that any attack would be made but on the off-side, to which the greater part of their guns had been brought. The enemy had left the other nearly defenceless. As the British squadron bore down on the French fleet, they were assailed by a shower of shot and shells from batteries placed on an island which commanded the passage; between the end of the enemy's line and the shore; besides this, they were also exposed to a tremendous fire from the star-board side of the French ships, within half gun-shot distance.

This dreadful salute was received in silence by the British, who were coolly employed aloft, in each ship, in furling sails, and below in tending the braces, and making ready for anchoring. The first ship that had the honour of leading the way, in rounding the enemy's line, was the Goliah; a 74, Captain Foley, who having gained the inside of Le Guerrier, also a 74, the first ship in the line, he poured into her a most destructive broadside. It was originally Foley's intention to have singled out this ship as his opponent, but having drifted from the proper position, he dropped upon her neighbour the Conquerant, anchored by her stern, and in ten minutes shot away her mainmast. The Zealous, another 74, Captain Hood, who followed close in the wake of the Goliah, took up the station which Foley intended to have occupied,—engaged the Guerrier, and in twelve minutes totally disabled her.

The third ship which doubled the enemy's line

was the Orion, Sir J. Saumarez, who passing the Zealous, but, at the same instant, pouring into that ship's antagonist, the Guerrier, a murderous fire so long as her guns would bear upon her, anchored between the fifth and sixth ships from the last named vessel. Taking her station on the larboard bow of the Franklin, an 80 gun ship, and the quarter of the Peuple Souverain, a 74, receiving and returning the fire of both. The Audacious, Captain Gould, next followed, pouring, as the others had done, a heavy fire into the shattered Guerrier as she passed. Close after her came the Thesus, Captain Miller, who, following the example of the Audacious, discharged a tremendous broadside, and brought down almost every remaining stick on board that ill fated ship. These ships, having each selected an antagonist, began a close and furious engagement.

While these advanced vessels doubled the French line, the Vanguard, Nelson's ship, was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy, within half pistol-shot of their third ship, the Spartiate, a 74. Nelson had six colours flying in different parts of his rigging, lest they should be shot away. He instantly opened a tremendous fire, under cover of which the other four ships of his division, the Minotaur, Bellerophon, Defence, and Majestic, sailed on a-head of the admiral. In a few minutes, every man stationed at the first six guns, in the forepart of the Vanguard's deck, was killed or wounded—these guns were three times cleared. Captain Louis, in the Minotaur, anchored next a-head, and took off the fire of the Aquilon, the fourth in the enemy's line. The Bellerophon, Captain Darby, passed a-head, and dropped her stern anchor on the starboard bow of the Orient, the 7th in the line, and whose difference of force,

from that of her antagonist, was in proportion of 7 to 3, and whose weight of ball, from the lower deck alone, exceeded that from the whole broadside of the Bellerophon. Captain Peyton, in the Defence, took his station a-head of the Minotaur, and engaged the Franklin, the sixth in the line; thus was that ship, with several others, who, as has been already said, were attacked on the land side, placed between two fires. The Majestic, Captain Westcott, got entangled with the main rigging of one of the French ships astern of the Orient, and suffered dreadfully from that three-decker's fire, but she swung clear, and closely engaging the Heureux, the ninth ship in the line, received also the fire of the Tonnant, which was the eight. The other four ships of the British line, having been detached previous to the discovery of the French, were at a considerable distance when the action began. It commenced at half past 6; about 7 night closed, leaving the combatants no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets. Troubridge, in the Culloden, then foremost of the remaining ships, was two leagues astern. He came on sounding as the other ships had done. As he advanced, the increasing darkness augmented the difficulty of the navigation, and suddenly, after having found eleven fathoms water, before the lead could be hove again, he was fast aground; nor could all his own exertions, joined to those of other two ships which came to his assistance, get him off in time to bear a part in the action. His ship, however, served as a beacon to the Alexander and Swiftsure, which would else, from the course they were holding, have gone considerably further on the reef, and must inevitably have been lost.

These ships entered the bay and took their stations, in the darkness, in a manner still spoken of

with admiration by all who remember it. Captain Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, a 74, as he was bearing down, fell in with what seemed to be a strange sail. Nelson had directed his ships to hoist four lights horizontally at the main peak as soon as it became dark, and this vessel had no such distinction. Hallowell, however, with great judgment, ordered his men not to fire; if she was an enemy, he said, she was in too disabled a state to escape, but from her sails being loose, and the way in which her head was, it was probable she might be an English ship. It was the *Bellerophon* overpowered by the huge *Orient*; her lights had gone overboard, nearly 200 of her crew were killed or wounded, all her masts and cables had been shot away, and she was drifting out of the line towards the lee side of the bay. Her station at this important time, was occupied by the *Swiftsure*, which opened a steady fire on the *Franklin*, and the bows of the French admiral. At the same instant Captain Ball, with the *Alexander*, passed under his stern, and anchored within side on his larboard quarter, raking him, and keeping a severe fire of musquetry upon his decks. The last ship which arrived to complete the destruction of the enemy was the *Leander*. Captain Thomson, finding that nothing could be done that night to get off the *Culloden*, advanced with the intention of anchoring athwart-hawse of the *Orient*. The *Franklin* was so near her a-head that there was not room for him to pass clear of the two, he therefore took his station athwart-hawse of the latter in such a position as to rake both. This masterly manœuvre, by which he dreadfully annoyed the enemy, whilst his own ship remained in comparative safety, consisted in his placing his ship between the bow and stern of two of the enemy's vessels; which, being

moored, could bring only the one her bow and the other her stern guns to bear upon him, whilst he swept their decks, from stem to stern, with whole broadsides.

The two first ships of the French line had been dimasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action, and the others suffered so severely that victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth were taken possession of at half past 8. Meantime, Nelson received a wound on the head from a piece of landridge shot. Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal. Nelson himself thought so; a large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye, and, the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cockpit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors—with a natural but pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands, that he might instantly attend the admiral. “No,” said Nelson, “I will take my turn with my brave fellows.” Nor would he suffer his wound to be examined till every man who had previously been wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson. He then sent for Captain Louis, from on board the *Minotaur*, that he might thank him personally for the great assistance which he had rendered to the *Vanguard*; and ever mindful of those who deserved to be his friends,

appointed Captain Hardy, of the *La Mutine*, to the command of his own ship, Captain Berry having to go home with the news of the victory. When the surgeon came in due time to examine the wound, (for it was in vain to intreat him to let it be examined sooner,) the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men, and of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The surgeon requested, and, as far as he could, ordered him to remain quiet, but Nelson could not rest. He called for his secretary, Mr Campbell, to write the dispatches. Campbell had himself been wounded, and was so affected, at the blind and suffering state of the admiral, that he was unable to write. The chaplain was sent for, but before he came Nelson, with his characteristic eagerness, took the pen, and contrived to trace a few words, marking his devout sense of the success which had already been obtained. He was now left alone, when suddenly a cry was heard on deck that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion he found his way up unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter deck; where he immediately gave orders that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy. It was soon after 9 that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys, the admiral, who, though he had received three wounds, yet would not leave his post; a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried below, but to be left to die upon deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. Her sides had just been painted, and the oil jars, and paint buckets, were lying on the poop. By the prodigious light of the conflagration, the situation of the two fleets could now

be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguished. About 10 o'clock, the ship blew up with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel. Many of her officers and men jumped overboard, some clinging to the spars and pieces of wreck with which the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momentarily dreaded. Some were picked up by our boats, and some, even in the heat and fury of the action, were dragged into the lower ports of the nearest British ships, by the British sailors. The greater part of her crew, however, maintained their posts to the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck.

This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful. The firing immediately ceased on both sides, and the first sound which broke the dead calm was the dash of her shattered masts and yards falling into the water, from the vast height to which they had been projected by the explosion. About 70 of the Orient's crew, which originally consisted of 1010 men, were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished were the commodore, Casa Bianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old. They were seen floating on a shattered mast when the ship blew up. She had money on board (the plunder of Malta,) to the amount of £660,000 sterling. The masses of burning wreck which were scattered by the explosion, excited, for some moments, apprehensions in the English which they had never felt from any other danger. Two large pieces fell into the main and foretops of the Swiftsure without injuring any person. A port-fire also fell into the main-royal of the Alexander,—the fire which it occasioned was speedily extinguished, Captain Ball having provided, as far as human fore-

sight could provide, against any such danger. All the shrewds and sails of his ship, not absolutely necessary for its immediate management, were thoroughly netted, and so rolled up that they were as hard and as little inflammable as so many solid cylinders.

The firing recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, and continued till about three. At day break, the Guillaume Tell and the Genereux, the two rear ships of the enemy, were the only French ships of the line which had their colours flying. They cut their cables in the forenoon, not having been engaged, and stood out to sea, and two frigates with them. The Zealous pursued; but as there was no other ship in a condition to support Captain Hood, he was recalled. It was generally believed by the officers, that if Nelson had not been wounded, not one of these ships could have escaped. The four certainly could not, if the Culloden had got into action; and if the frigates belonging to the squadron had been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have left Aboukir Bay. These four vessels, however, were all that escaped, and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history. "Victory," said Nelson, "is not a name strong enough for such a scene!" He called it a conquest. Of 13 sail of the line, 9 were taken, and 2 burnt; of the 4 frigates, 1 was sunk, another, the Artemise, was burnt in a villainous manner by her Captain, M. Estandlet, who, having fired a broadside at the Thesus, struck his colours, then set fire to the ship, and escaped with most of his crew to shore. The British loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to 895. Westcott was the only captain who fell. 3105 of the French, including the wounded, were sent on shore by cartel,

and 5225 perished. As soon as the conquest was completed, Nelson sent orders through the fleet to return thanksgiving, in every ship, for the victory with which Almighty God had blessed his Majesty's arms. Long after this tremendous battle innumerable bodies were seen floating about the bay, in spite of all the exertions which were made to sink them, as well from fear of pestilence, as from the loathing and horror which the sight occasioned. The shore, for an extent of 4 leagues, was covered with wreck; and the Arabs found employment for many days in burning on the beach the fragments which were cast up, for the sake of the iron. In order to give a more complete idea of the force employed in this memorable engagement, than can be gathered from the narrative of the battle, we introduce the following specification:—

BRITISH LINE OF BATTLE.

Ships.	Guns.	Men.	Commanders.	Kil. wd.	
Culloden*	74	590	Captain Troubridge	0 0	
Thesus	74	590	R. W. Miller	5 30	
Alexander	74	590	A. J. Ball	14 58	
Vanguard	74	595	{ Sir Horatio Nelson, Rear-admiral of the Blue, Captain Edward Berry	2 1	
Minotaur	75	640	Thomas Louis	23 64	
Leander	50	343	Thomas B. Thomson	0 14	
Swiftsure	74	590	B. Hallowell	7 22	
Audacious	74	590	D. Gould	1 36	
Defence	74	590	John Peyton	4 11	
Zealous	74	590	Samuel Hood	1 7	
Orion	75	590	Sir James Saumarez	13 29	
Goliath	74	590	Thomas Foley	21 41	
Majestic	74	590	Geo. B. Westcott	50 143	
Bellerophon	74	590	Hon. D'Etree Darby	94 148	
La Muine, brig	14				
				Total	218 677

* The Culloden struck the ground in leading in, and was prevented by that accident from taking any share in the engagement.

FRENCH LINE OF BATTLE.

Ships.	Guns.	Men.	Commanders.	How disposed of.
Le Guerrier	74	700		} Taken, and burnt by the British.
Le Conquerant	74	700		
Le Spartiate	74	700		} Taken, and called the Aboukir.
L'Aquilon	74	700	Thevenard.	
Le Souverain Peuple	74	700		} Taken, and called Le Guerrier.
Le Franklin	80	800	} Blanquet, first contre-amiral.	
L'Orient	120	1010		} Brueys, com- mander in chief
Le Tonnant	80	800		
L'Heureux	74	700		} Taken, and burnt by the British.
Le Timoleon	74	700		
Le Mercure	74	700		} Drove ashore, & burnt by her own crew.
Le Guillaume Tell	80	800	} Villeneuve second contre- amiral.	
Le Genereux	74	700		
FRIGATES.				
La Diane	48	300		} Escaped.
La Justice	44	300		
L'Artimese	36	250		} Escaped.
La Serieuse	36	250		
				} Dismasted, and sunk.

French vanity never suffered so severely as by this decisive battle, nor did it ever appear in a more ludicrous light, than when wincing under the defeat of the Nile. Their Journalists, of the period, very gravely advanced an opinion, that Admiral Nelson had no orders to take their fleet in the manner he did, and that he would find some difficulty in justifying his conduct!!! Others asserted, that had it not been for the accident of the Orient blowing up, it would have been at least a drawn battle. And another declared, that had not Nelson played them that scurvy trick of passing

between them and the land, they would absolutely have been victorious. Of this last opinion was poor Brneys himself. In a letter to the minister of Marine at Paris, he says, "That he considers his situation so impregnable, that if the whole navy of England were to come to the attack, they could make no impression on his line."

The rejoicings in Britain for this memorable victory, were fully proportioned to its importance, every village, every hamlet blazed with the light of triumph, illuminations followed illuminations in the different towns throughout the united Kingdom. In short, the enthusiasm which prevailed was universal.

Battle of Alexandria.

Two years after this great naval battle, the celebrated bay of Aboukir presented another spectacle, not less glorious. In the year 1800, a British fleet, having on board an army of 13,000 men, commanded by Sir Ralph Abercomby, were dispatched to Egypt to oppose the progress of the French arms in that country. This fleet came to anchor in Aboukir Bay, on the spot where the battle of the Nile had been fought. On the arrival of the fleet, the bay presented a spectacle which might well have appalled the stoutest heart, and damped the courage of the bravest troops in the world. The British soldiers saw from their ships, and saw without quailing, the head of the bay which rose like an amphitheatre, crowned with cannon and covered with the enemy from the beach to the summit. Undismayed by this formidable sight, it was determined that the troops should land in the very teeth of this array,

and the result be confided to the valour of British soldiers.

Accordingly, at two o'clock in the morning, (8th March,) the troops destined to effect a landing got into the boats. This division consisted of 5230 men. So well planned were the arrangements for the debarkation, that each boat was placed in such a manner, that when the landing was effected, every brigade, every regiment, and every company found itself with undivided numbers in its proper station. Thus, every man saw that, although he had changed his element, from the sea to the shore, he was surrounded with his comrades and friends, a circumstance which inspired the men with confidence and courage. This arrangement however, could not be speedily completed; the morning was partly far advanced before the whole were got in readiness to start from the ships, which was to be done simultaneously, and by a preconcerted signal. A little before nine o'clock, all the soldiers were in the boats; in these they were placed though closely, yet in the utmost order, every man being seated with his musket resting between his legs, whilst just room enough was left for the seamen to work the oars. Nothing could equal the intense interest of the scene at this particular moment. On the sea innumerable boats filled with troops, whose glittering equipments imparted magnificence to the spectacle, were seen ready to dash upon their opponents. While the dark lines of the enemy rose above each other in many rows, occupying the whole front of the rising ground, which now bristled with French bayonets; lower down on the beach was placed a strong body of cavalry in an extended line, ready to charge the moment the British troops should land. At nine o'clock, the anxiously expected signal at length was given, and the boats sprang for-

ward, under the orders of the Honourable Captain Alexander Cochrane. The seamen, straining every nerve, but at the same time moving in such concert, that no boat got a-head of the other. Every thing had been hitherto conducted with the utmost silence, the soldiers sat immoveable in the boats, and without exchanging a word, intently but fearlessly, gazing upon the terrible array on the shore. The enemy again, having completed their preparations, awaited in silence the approach of their assailants. Now, however, judging that the line of boats had come within the range of their guns, they opened a tremendous fire from their batteries in front, and from the castle of Aboukir in flank. Till that moment they did not believe the attempt was serious, or that our troops could be so fool-hardy as to hazard such an attempt on such lines and defences as they maintained. As the boats approached the shore, a fire of musquetry from 2500 men was added to showers of grape and shells, which fell in such quantities amongst the boats, that their effects upon the sea on that occasion, has been compared to the ebullitions of a boiling pot. Undismayed by this salutation, the boats continued to advance with the greatest order and regularity, which was so admirably maintained, that every prow touched the beach nearly at the same instant. They were now, and before they had time to land, charged by the French cavalry, who were seen hacking the men in the boats. But the scene was shortly changed, in a few minutes the British soldiers leaping into the water, formed upon the beach, and, as a commencement, nearly annihilated the cavalry which had first annoyed them. Scarcely one of these returning to boast of their temerity. As an irregular fire however would not only prove ineffect-

ral, but have created confusion in the ranks, the men were ordered not to load, but to rush up the face of the hill, and charge the enemy on the summit. The ascent was steep, and so covered with loose sand, that the soldiers every step they advanced, sunk back half a pace. Delay was thus added to danger, and the men reached, with exhausted strength, the point where the greatest effect was required. As hesitation in such circumstances would have proved ruinous, they instantly rushed up the hill, and reaching the top before their antagonists could again load, drove them from their position at the point of the bayonet. A squadron of cavalry which had advanced to attack the 42^d regiment after they had driven back the infantry immediately opposed to them, was instantly repulsed with the loss of their commander. The party of the enemy, who had deserted their guns, having partly formed in rear of the second small sand hills, kept up a scattered fire for some time, but on the advance of the troops, who gallantly charged up the hill, though sinking to the knees in the loose sand at every step; they again fled in the utmost confusion. Thus was decided one of the most brilliant achievements in the annals of British warfare. Within the space of a very few minutes after the landing of our troops, the face of the hill which fronted the bay, and which had exhibited such a formidable array, was completely cleared of the enemy, and its summit gained. The principal loss of the British, which amounted to 102 killed, and 515 wounded, was incurred while in the boats, and when mounting the hill. In both cases, they were exposed to the enemy, without being able to make any defence; when they had gained a position where their courage, and firmness, and courage was available, the loss sustained was trifling.

By the great exertions of the navy, the whole army was landed the same evening, and for three days thereafter, was engaged in landing stores and provisions. This necessary delay enabled the enemy to collect more troops, so that the British on moving forward in the evening of the 12th, found them strongly fortified among sand hills, and palm trees, to the number of more than 5000 infantry, 600 cavalry, and 30 pieces of artillery well appointed. On the morning of the 13th, the troops moved forward to the attack in three columns of regiments; the 90th, or Perthshire regiment, forming the advance of the first column; and the 92d, or Gordon Highlanders, that of the second; the reserve, marching in column, covering the movements of the first line, and running parallel with it. When the army had cleared the late trees, the enemy quitted the heights, and with great boldness moved down on the 92d, which by this time had formed in line. The French opened a heavy fire of cannon and musquetry, which the 92d quickly returned, firmly resisting the repeated attacks of the French line, supported as it was by a powerful artillery, and singly maintaining their ground till the line came up. At the same time, the French cavalry with the greatest impetuosity charged down a declivity on the 90th regiment. This corps standing with the coolest intrepidity allowed them to approach within fifty yards, when by a well directed fire, they so completely broke the charge, that only a few reached the regiment, and most of these were instantly bayoneted; the rest fled to their left in the greatest confusion. The 90th regiment, being a corps of light infantry, and equipped with helmets, were mistaken for dismounted cavalry, and the enemy believing them out of their element, at-

tacked with the more boldness as they expected less resistance. The two divisions now formed line, the reserve remaining in column to cover the right flank. The whole moved forward in this order, suffering from the enemy's flying artillery which, having six horses to each gun, executed their movements with the greatest celerity; while the British with only a few badly appointed cavalry and no artillery horses, had their guns dragged by sailors, and occasionally assisted by the soldiers through sands so loose and so deep, that the wheels sometimes sunk to the axle. Yet slow as the movements were, the enemy could offer no effectual resistance, as our troops advanced and retreated to their lines in front of Alexandria. These lines Sir Ralph Abercromby determined to force. To accomplish this important object, General Moore with the reserve was ordered to the right, and General Hutehinson with the second line to the left, while the first line remained in the centre. From the formidable and imposing appearance of the enemy's defences, this seemed a bold attempt.

Not knowing their relative positions, or whether after they should be taken they could be maintained without proper artillery, if the one commanded the other, our commander found it necessary to reconnoitre with care. In this state of doubt and delay, the troops suffered exceedingly from a galling fire without having it in their power to return a shot, while the French had leisure to take a cool aim. On this trying occasion, the intrepidity and discipline of the British remained unshaken. Eager to advance, but restrained till it could be done with success, and the least loss of lives, they remained for hours exposed to a fire that might have shaken the firmness of the best

troops. The difficulties of the attack were found to be insurmountable, and they were ordered to retire and occupy that position, which was afterwards so well maintained on the 21st March, and in which they avenged themselves for their present disappointment. On that memorable day the whole British army was under arms at three o'clock in the morning; the enemy occupying a strong position in their front. No movement however, took place on either side for half an hour; the end of that interval, the report of a musket, followed by that of some cannon, were heard on the left of the line. This seemed a signal to the enemy, who immediately advanced and got possession of a small picquet, occupied by part of a regiment. All ranks now felt a presentiment, that the great struggle was at hand, which was to decide the fate of Egypt. General Moore, who happened to be the general officer of the night, galloped off to the left the instant he had heard the firing. Impressed with the idea that this was a false attack, and that the real one was intended for the right, he turned back, and had hardly reached his brigade, when a loud hurra, seconded by a fire of musquetry, announced the real intention of the enemy. The morning was unusually cloudy, dark, and close. The enemy advanced in silence, until they approached the advanced picquets, when they gave a shout and pushed forward. At this moment, Brigadier General Oaks directed Major Stanley to advance with the left wing of the 42d, and take part of the open ground lately occupied by the 28th regiment, which was now ordered within the redoubt, when they were soon afterwards attacked by the enemy, who in the same instant assailed with great fury an extensive ruin occupied by the British, and the wing of the High-

landers on its left. This impetuosity was quickly checked by a well directed fire from the troops which occupied their strongholds. While the front of the army was thus engaged, a column of the enemy, preceded by a six pounder, came gently along the column, between the left of the 42d and the right of the guards. This column which bore the name of the *Invincibles*, calculated its distance and line of march so correctly, that wheeling to its left, it marched in between the right and left wings of the Highlanders, which were drawn up in parallel lines. The morning was so dark, that this close column got well advanced between the two lines of the Highlanders before it was perceived, but, when discovered the two regiments instantly faced inwards and fired upon them. The enemy thus taken between two fires rushed forward with an intention of pushing in the ruin, which was at short distance. When they passed the rear of the redoubt, the 28th faced about, and fired upon them; still they endeavoured to gain the ruins, not aware of their being occupied by the British, and rushed through the opening followed by the Highlanders, when the 58th and 40th, also facing about in the same manner as the 28th, poured in a murderous fire upon the enemy. This combined attack proved decisive of the fate of this unfortunate body, which had unwittingly entrapped itself. The survivors, about 200 threw down their arms; and thus perished, with those who bore a name which had been carried in many a hard fought field. After this France had no longer her *Invincibles*. The first rank of the 42d, the rear having followed the *Invincibles* into the ruins, were now hotly engaged with the enemy, and a great additional force was also seen advancing. To oppose these, the Highlanders

were ordered out of the ruins, they formed line, charged the enemy, and at the point of the bayonet, drove them back with great loss. Encouraged by the commander-in-chief himself, who, in admiration of their bravery, and to excite them to future exertion, called out, "My brave Highlanders, remember your country, remember your forefathers." The appeal was not in vain; the enemy as we have already said, were repulsed. The battle had now continued with various vicissitudes and changes of positions, on the part of the contending armies for five successive hours. It was now eight o'clock in the morning, but the enemy though repulsed at all points, still presented a formidable appearance. They continued a heavy cannonade, from which the Highlanders in particular suffered severely, being posted on a level piece of ground. The shot rolled after striking and carried off a file of men, at every successive round. This was more trying to the courage and discipline of the troops than the former attacks; but the trial was supported with perfect steadiness, not a man moved from his position except to close up the opening made by the shot which passed over the first line, struck in front of the second, and did dreadful execution. As a last effort, the enemy pushed forward some sharpshooters, but at the first fire from a 24 pounder placed in the redoubt, they began to retreat with great celerity, and before a fourth round was discharged, they had fled beyond reach.

In a furious charge of cavalry, General Abercromby received his mortal wound. He was alone near the redoubts, when some French dragoons, penetrated to the spot, and he was thrown from his horse. From the tassal of his sword, the man that rode at him, and endeavoured to cut him down,

must have been an officer. This sword, however, the veteran general seized and wrested from him before he could affect his destruction; and at the same moment, this daring assailant was bayoneted by a private of the 42d. Sir Ralph only complained of a contusion in his breast, supposed to have been given, in the scuffle, by the hilt of the sword, but was entirely ignorant of the moment he received the wound in his thigh, which occasioned his death. After this wound, Sir Sidney Smith was the first officer that came to the general, and from him received that sword which the latter had so gloriously acquired from the French officer. The cause of this present was the general's observation, that Sir Sidney's sword had been broken.

About ten in the forenoon the action was terminated; while Sir Ralph Abercromby never quitted the battery he retired to. But as he continued walking about, many officers had no suspicion of his being wounded, but from the blood trickling down his clothes. At length getting faint, he was put in a hammock, and conveyed to a boat, which carried him on board Lord Keith's ship, being accompanied by his friend Sir Thomas Dwyer. The battle was fought by the right of the English alone. The whole British army, reduced by the actions on the 8th and 13th, by the men left in care of the wounded, the absence of the 92d regiment the marines and dismounted dragoons, did not yield the effective force of 10,000 men including 300 cavalry; yet it must be remembered that it was only the half of this number that contested with the whole united force of the enemy. The field of battle in front of the British works being very contracted the killed and wounded presented a distressing spectacle. Near 1700 French and 400 horses were found on the field.