

**THE CORRESPONDENCE OF COLONEL
WADE, COLONEL NAPIER, MAJOR-
GENERAL SIR H.
HARDINGE AND GENERAL THE HON. SIR
LOWRY G. COLE, RELATING TO THE
BATTLE OF ALBUERA**

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The Correspondence of Colonel Wade, Colonel Napier, Major-General Sir H. Hardinge and General the Hon. Sir Lowry G. Cole, relating to the Battle of Albuera by Various

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1841.

WDR

At the request of some of my friends, I have been induced to collect and print for private distribution the following correspondence which originally appeared in the *United Service Journal*.

Highfield Park, May, 1841.

G. LOWRY COLE.

* When it came out Sir L. Cole was at the Cape as
for Col. Beresford's letter. Sir L. C. said to Col. B.
"This cannot be contradicted." Col. B. ans?
"Hardinge is in England & he will contradict it."

CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

*Colonel Wade on a passage relating to the Battle of Albuera,
in Colonel Napier's History.*

MR. EDITOR.—The following passages occur in the third and sixth volumes of Col. Napier's "History of the War in the Peninsula," with reference to the advance of the Fourth Division at the Battle of Albuera:—

In vol. iii., page 539,—“while he” (Lord Beresford),
“hesitated, Col. Hardinge boldly ordered Cole to advance.”

In volume vi., page 53,—“Justificatory notes” - -

- - “In the most critical part of this great and
awful battle of Albuera” - - “Sir Henry Har-

dinge took it upon himself to win it for you” - -
“Ordering an advance which gained the day.”

There is a very material error in both these passages. Sir Lowry Cole received no order to advance from Sir Henry Hardinge.

It is unnecessary to explain here why, when the third volume of the “History” originally appeared, I did not at once seek to have this error corrected; but I cannot permit it to be now repeated in the sixth volume without affirming—

First, That during the whole of that eventful day, from the time the fourth division was posted in the morning by the Quartermaster-General, Sir B. D’Urban,—as described in Lord Beresford’s despatch,—Sir Lowry Cole received no order whatever, either from Sir Henry Hardinge or from any other officer.

Secondly, That the whole merit and responsibility of the advance of the Fourth Division belonged exclusively to Sir Lowry Cole.

It is quite true that the advance of the Division was recommended, and very urgently so, both by Lieut.-Col. Rooke, and Lieut.-Col. Hardinge,—the former Assist.-Adj.-Gen. to the united British and Portuguese force, and the latter Deputy-Quartermaster-Gen. to the Portuguese troops,—and I may add, also, by every Staff Officer attached to Sir Lowry Cole. The General, however, stood in need of no such suggestions: the state of the battle at the time they were offered rendered it as evident to him as to all

not to be
used
in the
History

those around him, that the troops under his command could not very much longer remain inactive spectators of the contest. But then Sir Lowry had received the strictest injunction not to move his Division from the very important position on which it had been posted, without the express orders of Marshal Beresford; and to obtain these he had despatched an Aide-de-Camp (the late Major de Roverea), when those reverses happened on our left which have been elsewhere described. Poor de Roverea was, however, as it afterwards appeared, severely wounded in the head while proceeding in search of the Marshal, and never reached him; and Sir Lowry was, with the greatest anxiety, looking for his return, when that crisis of the battle arrived, when not only the expected orders could no longer be waited for, but when the General commanding the Fourth Division could no longer hesitate to take upon himself the responsibility of acting on his own judgment. Sir Lowry, accordingly, decided on the advance of his Division, and led the Fusilier Brigade to that attack which has been so eloquently described by Napier, and which he very truly asserts "gained the day."

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,
 J. WADE, Colonel,
 Late Aide-de-Camp to Sir Lowry Cole,
 Abingdon Hall, Cambridge, June 13, 1840.

Colonel Napier, in reply to Colonel Wade on Albuera.

Freshford, July 2, 1840.

MR. EDITOR,—It is to be regretted Colonel Wade did not correct the error he says I have fallen into, relative to Sir Henry Hardinge and Sir Lowry Cole at the battle of Albuera, at the time my third volume was published, and the more so as a new edition of that volume has just been printed. The accuracy or inaccuracy of Colonel Wade's statement I cannot affirm or deny, of my own knowledge, but I will state my authorities for the version I have given.

I have a distinct recollection that Sir Henry Hardinge told me, in conversation, he had taken upon himself to give orders for the march of the Fusilier Brigade, not as presuming to control General Cole, but as a Staff Officer representing the Commander-in-Chief. This conversation, however, took place fourteen years ago, and I cannot call upon Sir Henry to recollect it at such a long period; moreover, he has always studiously avoided being mixed up in

* Col W. had written to Col N. that he was wrong
 & so and so.

the Albuera controversy, and to force him into it would be an ill return for his kindness in giving me materials. I can, nevertheless, without doing that, offer the following testimony :—

The conversation alluded to arose from Sir Henry having lent me a memoir upon the battle of Albuera, composed and printed by Sir Benjamin D'Urban, but not published. This memoir had manuscript marginal notes by Sir Henry ; and of course everything related of his proceedings, which was not amplified or contradicted by him in his notes, I had a right to conclude were assented to by him. Now, when treating of this movement of the Fusiliers, Sir Benjamin, after saying Marshal Beresford had despatched orders to General Cole to send his left brigade to the hill, where the brunt of the battle was going on, continues thus :—

“The order had been anticipated, for Colonel Hardinge had perceived the necessity, and with his characteristic promptness and decision, had hastened to point it out to General Cole, who instantly directed the Fusilier Brigade under Sir William Myers, and the battalion of the Lusitanian Legion under Colonel Hawkeshaw, upon this duty.”

Opposite to this passage, Sir Henry had made the following marginal note :—

“The instant Cole's division was in movement, and his left brigade approached the right of Houghton's, I went to Abercrombie's brigade, which was in the rear of Houghton's left, and authorized him to deploy and move past Houghton's left. Whilst Houghton's brigade as a centre held the hill, Myers' and Abercrombie's brigades nearly at the same time passed the flanks at its right and left, and made a simultaneous attack on the enemy, whose columns beginning to shake, went off by the rear first, the three British brigades united in one *pêle mêle* charge. The French cavalry made an attempt to charge the Portuguese, and impede Cole's movement, as stated, but Myers' and Abercrombie's brigades, in my opinion decided the day.”

From this it is clear that my expressions, viz. :—“Sir Henry Hardinge took it upon himself to win it for you,—ordering an advance which gained the day,” having reference to the movement of Abercrombie's brigade, as well as the Fusiliers, are not erroneous, even though Colonel Wade should be quite right in respect to General Cole. Upon this last point, I have given my authority, and have

nothing further to offer; but I may remark that my third volume has been published nine years, that I have, since its publication, conversed and corresponded with Sir Lowry Cole upon the Peninsular War; yet I have never until now been told my version was deemed inaccurate. Wherefore I conclude Sir Lowry has not thought the error, if it be one, very material; the points in dispute being merely whether Sir Henry Hardinge earnestly recommended, or whether he authorised or ordered a movement, the necessity of which was, according to Colonel Wade, quite evident to the youngest Staff Officer on the spot. Nevertheless, as Marshal Beresford, to this day, condemns the movement as a false one, though successful, and General Cole, receiving due honour for his intrepid and brilliant execution of it, loses little by having a conception, the merit of which has been so disputed, attributed to another man.

WM. NAPIER, Col.

Sir Henry Hardinge on the advance of the Fusilier Brigade at the Battle of Albuera.

South Park, Penshurst, Sept. 9, 1840.

MR. EDITOR,—I have received from London the three last numbers of the United Service Journal, containing a letter from Colonel Wade, and an answer by Colonel Napier, relating to the movement of the 4th Division at the battle of Albuera. The perusal of these papers induces me to request you to insert this letter in your Journal.

The report of the Albuera campaign, quoted by Colonel Napier, was written by Sir Benjamin d'Urban shortly after the event. About sixteen years ago, when Colonel Napier was collecting materials for his "History," having access to the papers of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Bathurst, he met me, and requested me to give him any information I possessed relating to this campaign. I considered the printed but not published report by Sir Benjamin d'Urban to be the most authentic document that could be furnished. He was not only the officer the most distinguished for his abilities on Marshal Beresford's Staff,—being the Quartermaster-General of the Portuguese army,—but he was a friend in whom Marshal Beresford reposed most justly the greatest confidence. He was also the officer under whose orders I had the happiness to serve during the greater part of the Peninsular War. No part of the "History of the Peninsular War" had then been published,

He really thought so.

nor had any controversy arisen between Marshal Beresford and Colonel Napier. Sir B. d'Urban was at that time in the West Indies, Governor of Demerara and Berbice.

The conversation between me and Colonel Napier took place in St. James's Park about sixteen years ago, and very probably in the course of it I told him that I had urged Sir Lowry Cole to make the attack, with all the authority I possessed as Deputy Quartermaster-General of the Portuguese Army. An answer to the same effect was given by me to Lord Beresford, in conversation with Lord Beresford shortly after the 3rd volume appeared; and it is stated in *Strictures*, p. 251, "That excellent officer (Sir L. Cole), not having any orders, though he finally assented was, I believe, with some difficulty persuaded to adopt the measure that had been suggested." If I had given a positive order to Sir Lowry Cole, in Marshal Beresford's name, to make the attack, I should have stated it in the margin of the printed report, the notes having been written at Colonel Napier's request, after this conversation, and at the time I sent him this printed report; or I should have stated it to Lord Beresford in the conversation to which I have alluded. Colonel Napier had a right to conclude, that in a matter relating to myself, the passage in General d'Urban's report was correct, and assented to by me. It was correct; and, therefore, I left it as I found it, without making any comment upon it. I find that passage to be as follows, in the report which was published by Sir B. d'Urban in 1831:—"Sir William Beresford despatched orders to the Hon. Lowry Cole to send his left brigade to this point. The order had been anticipated; for Colonel Hardinge had perceived the necessity, and, with his characteristic promptness and decision, had hastened to point it out to General Cole, who instantly directed the Fusilier brigade under Sir William Myers, and the battalion of the Lusitanian Legion, under Colonel Hawkeshaw, upon this duty."

I could neither affirm nor contradict that part stating that an order had been sent by Marshal Beresford to Sir Lowry Cole; but the passage relating to myself, "that I had perceived the necessity, and hastened to point it out to General Cole," was an accurate account, although, as I shall show, within the limits of my interference on that occasion.

After the publication of Colonel Napier's 2nd volume, I again met him in London; and, expressing my regret at

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