

HISTORY

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE AND REVIEW FOR THE TEACHER,
THE STUDENT, AND THE EXPERT.

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Edited by HAROLD F. B. WHEELER, *F.R.Hist.S.*



VOL. IV.

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1915

No. 3

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF AN EYEWITNESS.

WE have to thank Mr. Mark Beaufoy, formerly Member of Parliament for Kennington, for permission to print the following letter, which was written by his uncle, an officer who fought in the battle which crushed Napoleon.

PERONNE, NEAR BINCH,
Wednesday, June 21st, 1815.

My Dear Father,

On Friday last, the 18th instant,¹ we received a sudden order to march as the French had entered Belgium, and quitting Enghien about 4 a.m. we reached Braine-le-Comte about six, where we bivouacked for four hours, as no precise intelligence had been received of the enemy. However, a heavy cannonade being heard, we marched to Nivelles, and there took up a clover field for our bivouac. Scarcely had the men taken off their accoutrements when we were ordered to march to Quatre Bras, a position about 24 miles from Enghien. Although this long march had dreadfully fatigued us, yet the men formed line with the greatest alacrity and marched to the French. Quatre Bras is between Nivelles and Namur, and is so named from four *pavés* meeting on the top of a gentle hill that commands all the surrounding country. Here some houses were converted into a redoubt, which swept the four *pavés* and the surrounding cornfields; and within two hundred yards of our battery, towards the south-west, is a very thick and extensive wood, forming a strong position for Light Infantry.

The action had commenced about 2 o'clock p.m. by an attack upon the Belgians, who were soon reinforced by our 3rd Division, who alone supported the attacks of the French until 7 o'clock in the evening, when we arrived. At this moment we found the Belgians fled, the wood in possession of the French, and our very guns attacked by the Cuirassiers,

¹ The date is incorrect, it should be the 16th.