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Sommario/riassunto

A masterful, epic account of the Spanish Ulcer that drained Napoleon's resources and played a pivotal role in the end of his domination of Europe. The author served with distinction in the actions of the Light Division, such as the epic march to Talavera, the battles of Fuentes d'Onoro, Salamanca, Nivelle, Orthes and Toulouse. He left the service a General and Knight Commander of the Order of Bath. Napier's History would rank as the most important history to be written by an actual participant, and was as controversial with his countrymen as among his contemporaries on the Continent. In this fifth volume (early 1813 to December 1813), Napier follows the Allied forces in their march to the French frontier and beyond. As Napoleon attempts to recover from the shattering failure of the 1812 Russian campaign and regain the initiative in Germany, the Duke of Wellington's army, British, Portuguese and Spanish, begins to assert a dominance over their French opponents in the Peninsular. Despite further political manoeuvring the Spanish and with the Regency in Portugal, Wellington sent his army of a brilliant series of outflanking moves, culminating in the crushing of the French armies at Vitoria. Although he was enabled by this victory to push to the French frontier, he was left with two sieges at Pamplona and St Sebastian behind his lines, and a re-organized French army under Soult to his front. Eventually defeating the French offensive designed to relieve Pamplona, despite some less than spectacular performances by some of his subordinates, Wellington was able to invade France proper. A number of battles such as St. Pierre, and the Nivelle, all allied successes, resulted in a proper push toward final victory. Napier also covers the events in other parts of Spain, where the very capable Marshal Suchet was able to fight off a number campaigns in Catalonia or aiming for Catalonia, despite the British command of the seas.
